



## Healthy Eating and Activity After Cancer

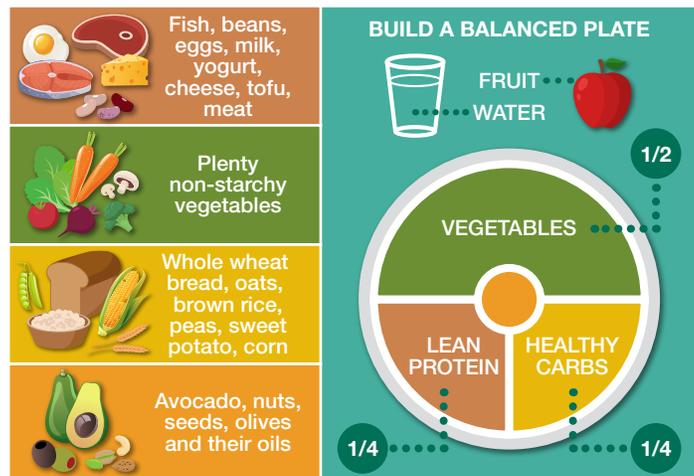
Now that you're done with treatment, you're ready move forward with your life in as healthy a way as possible. And one of the best approaches for doing that? Eating a healthy diet and being physically active.

Together, they can help lower the risk of cancer returning, improve quality of life and mobility, and lower the risk for other illnesses, such as heart disease, bone loss and diabetes.

### Eat a healthy, well-balanced diet that has the right amount of calories, carbohydrates, protein and fats for your body.

Try these tips:

- Include a variety of foods every day – grains, proteins, fruits and vegetables.
- Don't skip meals. Missing meals can slow your metabolism.
- Eat several servings of vegetables and fruit each day. They can be fresh, frozen or canned.
- Include high-fiber foods (whole-grain breads, cereals, beans) and aim for around 25g of fiber daily.
- Favor baking and broiling foods.



- Stay hydrated with around 64 ounces of water daily.
- Limit salt-cured and processed meat (bacon, sausage and most deli meats) and red meats to 2-3 servings per week.
- Limit alcohol. Zero is best.

### Get back in touch with your body's signals.

Our body sends us signals to help us know when we're hungry, satisfied and full. Hunger can feel like emptiness in the stomach, gnawing or growling, which many people are familiar with. But you may also be irritable and tired, or have trouble focusing on a task. By tuning into the way your own body signals hunger, you can learn to honor these signals and eat when you start to have them.

Try these tips:

- Avoid distractions when you eat, such as watching TV, driving or reading.
- Eat slowly and chew foods well. Rushing through a meal can lead to feeling "stuffed" before you know it.
- Pause partway through your meal to check in with your signals to see if you're still hungry or if you're starting to feel full. Stop eating when you are pleasantly full and feeling satisfied.

### Exercise regularly.

On top of its other benefits, physical activity helps build strength, reduce stress and maintain a healthy weight and healthy body. Try to make it a regular part of your week.

- Take it slow. Small, gradual changes will keep you motivated.
- Try walking. It's one of the easiest ways to stay active.
- Use the stairs instead of the elevator, park farther away, or do errands by bicycle.
- Include strength building activities, such as band stretches, light weightlifting, yoga or tai chi.

# Regaining and Maintaining Weight After Cancer

Whether you've had surgery, chemotherapy, immunotherapy, radiation — or some combination of these treatments — you may have had side effects that make it hard to eat and drink enough to meet your body's needs. And some of these may linger after treatment, including decreased appetite and changes to how you taste. In addition, some types of surgery may change the way your body digests and uses nutrients from foods, which can make gaining or maintaining weight harder.

## If you've been encouraged to gain weight to help you feel healthy and strong, try these tips:

- Eat small, snack-sized portions 5-6 times a day instead of traditional meals. This can prevent feeling too full and make it easier for your body to digest what you ate.
- Plan to eat every 2-3 hours, which can help you establish a routine.
- Eat a well-balanced diet that has the right amount of calories, carbohydrates, protein and fats for your body.
- Have a combination of foods on hand and ready to eat — frozen options, freshly prepared meals and snacks.
- Consider nutrition supplements, such as Boost or Ensure. You can drink them on their own, or mix them into a smoothie or ice cream milkshake.
- Try to make the most of each bite by adding calories using items such as sauces, dips, gravies, butter, cheese, mayo, avocado, cream, peanut/almond butter, nuts, honey, jam/jelly or brown sugar. For example, ½ turkey sandwich = good; ½ turkey sandwich with cheese, mayo and avocado = great

## Are you struggling with decreased appetite or not feeling hungry?

If this is happening, it can be easy to overestimate how much you're eating and tough to force yourself to eat when nothing sounds good.

In addition to the tips above, these strategies can help you eat and drink more so that your body gets the nutrients it needs:

- Accept the help of friends and loved ones who offer to bring or prepare well-tolerated meals so that you don't have to.
- Only sip drinks as needed with your meals so you have more room for food.
- Choose drinks with calories between meals — milk, juice and lemonade are a few good options.
- Keep snacks handy for nibbling between meals.

## Sources of protein

Getting enough protein helps you keep muscle mass and helps restore strength, mobility and stability. Add protein-rich foods to your meals and snacks. Options include meat, fish, eggs, dairy (milk, cheese, cottage cheese and yogurt), beans, nuts/nut butters and protein powders.

## If you have reduced or lost taste, or foods taste different, try these tips:

### For reduced or lost taste

- Add a little pizzazz to your foods with strongly-flavored condiments. Try BBQ sauce, mustard, pickles/pickled veggies, hot sauce, honey, jam/jelly or brown sugar.
- Sip on tart juice drinks between bites, such as lemonade, cherry or cranberry. This can help add flavor to mealtimes.

### For a bitter taste

- Try to limit red meats and increase dairy, nuts/nut butters and beans for protein.
- Serve foods chilled or at room temperature.
- Try fruit-based marinades.

### For a metallic taste

- Try to prevent foods from coming into contact with metal.
- Avoid canned foods.
- Use glassware, microwave-safe cookware and plastic or wooden utensils.
- Use the tips from above to mask the flavor if it's still there.

**If you need additional support or recommendations, contact a Siteman Registered Dietitian.**



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