



A CANCERHOME PUBLICATION, PROVIDING THE SUPPORT YOU NEED TO FOCUS ON HEALING

GOOD NUTRITION: AN ESSENTIAL ASPECT OF CANCER TREATMENT

Cancer treatment can be as physically challenging for patients as the disease itself. “Not getting proper nutrition can lead to fatigue, weakness and loss of muscle and other important body tissues,” reports Whitney Shingler, RD, CSO, LD, a specialist in the field of oncology nutrition. “Loss of lean body mass can cause heightened side effects from treatment, particularly chemotherapy, and ultimately lead to treatment delays that can affect a patient’s prognosis,” Whitney notes.

Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, mouth sores and painful swallowing are all common side effects and can have a detrimental effect on nutrition. When such problems arise, it’s not uncommon for cancer patients to self-treat using information obtained from unreliable sources, including the Internet.

“I have seen patients come in with all kinds of supplements and on very restrictive diets,” Whitney says. “Not only are some of these things expensive—and a miserable way to live—but they also can deprive patients of important nutrients necessary during cancer treatment.”

Whitney encourages all cancer patients undergoing treatment to consult their physicians and pharmacists before taking nutritional supplements. In addition, talking with a registered dietician will ensure that you are getting accurate, evidence-based guidelines on proper nutrition during treatment.

Indeed, the importance of eating well during treatment cannot be overemphasized. Chemotherapy, for example, binds to proteins in the body in order to work. If patients do not consume enough protein, chemotherapy can break down protein in the muscles, leaving patients weak and tired.

Protein also aids the body’s ability to recover from radiation therapy, Whitney adds. “The body requires increased protein intake to help heal its good tissues,” she explains. “When significant amounts of lean body mass are lost, recovery and survival become affected.”

In addition, a greater intake of vitamins and minerals may be necessary to cope with suppressed immune function, Whitney notes. But consult with your nutritionist before grabbing the vitamin bottle: large doses of antioxidant vitamins (A, C, and E) can be dangerous during cancer treatment.

To ensure that you’re getting proper nutrition, think of food as if it were medicine. “You take your medicine at scheduled times, so eat at frequent scheduled times,” Whitney says. “I encourage intake at least six to eight times per day. It doesn’t have to be a big meal, just something like peanut butter and crackers, an apple with cheese, a small bowl of cereal or graham crackers with milk. The most important thing is to include high protein foods when you eat.”

CCCNF will soon be offering a monthly nutrition talk, given by a Registered Dietitian that specializes in oncology nutrition.

RECIPE CORNER CANTALOUPE BANANA SMOOTHIE

Try this fruit filled smoothie from *Eating Well Through Cancer*, by Holly Clegg, for a nutritious and refreshing boost. For extra calories and nutrition, substitute a vanilla nutritional drink supplement in place of the ice cream. According to the authors of this recipe, this is especially beneficial for those experiencing a sore mouth or throat. (Go to www.hollyclegg.com for more information about this cookbook and author). (Recipe makes 2 servings.)



Ingredients:

1 teaspoon vanilla extract	1 tablespoon honey
1 banana	1 cup reduced-fat vanilla ice cream
1 cup cubed cantaloupe	

Directions:

Blend all ingredients in a blender or food processor until smooth.

Nutritional information per serving:

Calories 231, protein (g) 4, carbohydrate (g) 49, fat (g) 3, calories from fat (%) 9, saturated fat (g) 1, dietary fiber (g) 3, cholesterol (mg) 5, sodium (mg) 53. Diabetic exchanges: 1.5 fruit, 2 other carbohydrate, 0.5 fat.

TIPS FOR MANAGING A LOSS OF APPETITE

Patients who are undergoing cancer treatments may go through periods of time when they do not have a desire to eat or feel full after eating very small quantities of food. This can last for a few days or for the duration of treatment. Causes of a loss of appetite vary broadly and may include fatigue, anxiety, pain, depression, and/or the cancer itself. Appetite reduction may also be the result of surgery, certain medications, or treatment-related side effects such as nausea, vomiting, and/or changes in how food tastes or smells. The best way to manage a loss of appetite is often to treat the underlying cause. Because of this, it is vitally important to tell your treatment team how you are feeling both emotionally and physically. Medications and special techniques may be available to help manage any cancer or treatment-related side effects that are impacting your ability to maintain proper nutrition. Additionally, trying some of the strategies below may help you to increase your intake and ensure you are getting adequate calories, protein, and other nutrients.



Approaches to improve intake:

- Minimize your intake of fluids during meals, as they may make you feel full faster so that you eat less.
- Keep protein and calorie-rich foods (e.g. peanut butter or cheese crackers) with you at all times so that you can snack anytime you feel the urge.
- Identify the times of day when you feel the best (when you are well rested, without pain, etc.), and eat your largest meal at that time.
- Consider soft, cool, or frozen foods.
- Eat foods cold or at room temperature to minimize unappetizing odors.
- Avoid greasy or fried foods and heavy meals.

Tips for Increasing Protein and Calories in Your Diet:

- **Cheese:** Sprinkle cheese on potatoes, vegetables, casseroles, pastas, or salads, and add sliced cheese to sandwiches and breads.
- **Eggs:** Add chopped, hard boiled eggs to salads, vegetables, casseroles, etc.
- **Milk:** Substitute milk or half and half for water in recipes, and use whole milk instead of low-fat.
- **Other Dairy:** Eat/drink ice cream, yogurt, milkshakes, and egg-nogs.
- **Protein powder:** Blend protein powder into milkshakes and smoothies.
- **Peanut butter:** Spread peanut butter on bread, fruit, and vegetables, or use it in a milkshake.
- **Meat, poultry, fish, beans, legumes, tofu:** Increase your intake of these protein sources as much as possible by adding them to pastas, soups, casseroles, omelettes, etc.
- Consult with a dietician for more specific tips and suggestions.

Healthy Connections is a publication of Community Cancer Center of North Florida and is published for the general public to disseminate health-related information. This information is not to be used for diagnosing or prescribing. Please consult your physician before undertaking any form of medical treatment, diet plan or exercise regimen implied in this publication.

APRIL 2012

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1	2	3	4	5 MASSAGE THERAPY @ CCCNF, LAKE CITY 9AM – 3PM	6 MASSAGE THERAPY @ CCCNF, GAINESVILLE 11AM – 3PM	7
8	9	10	11	12 MASSAGE THERAPY @ CCCNF, LAKE CITY 9AM – 3PM SUPPORT GROUP @ CCCNF, LAKE CITY 11AM – 1PM	13 MASSAGE THERAPY @ CCCNF, GAINESVILLE 11AM – 3PM	14
15	16 ACS LOOK GOOD FEEL BETTER @ HOPE LODGE, GAINESVILLE 1PM – 2PM	17 SUPPORT GROUP @ CCCNF, GAINESVILLE 5:30PM (EVERY 3RD TUES)	18 ART THERAPY @ CCCNF, GAINESVILLE 11AM – 1PM	19 MASSAGE THERAPY @ CCCNF, LAKE CITY 9AM – 3PM ART THERAPY @ CCCNF, LAKE CITY 11AM – 1PM	20 MASSAGE THERAPY @ CCCNF, GAINESVILLE 11AM – 3PM	21
22	23	24	25 CANCER CONNECTIONS GUEST SPEAKER: DR. WARWICKE @ ACS HOPE LODGE 12PM - 1PM	26 MASSAGE THERAPY @ CCCNF, LAKE CITY 9AM – 3PM	27 MASSAGE THERAPY @ CCCNF, GAINESVILLE 11AM – 3PM	28
29	30					

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