

Making the Most of Each Bite

When you are undergoing cancer treatments, eating may be difficult. Eating calorie-packed meals and snacks can help you feel better and keep up your energy level.

Reasons to Contact Your Doctor

Contact your doctor if you:

- Can't control your nausea.
- Can't eat for more than a day.
- Lose more than 5 pounds.
- Have pain while eating.
- Can't urinate or have a bowel movement.
- Are vomiting for more than 24 hours.

Eating Tips

- Try eating six to eight small meals or snacks a day instead of three large meals. Small amounts may be easier to eat and tolerate than larger meals.
- If you can eat only a couple bites at a time, plan to eat frequently (as often as every half hour).

- Do not eat your favorite foods when you feel nauseous. If you vomit after eating a favorite food, you may no longer enjoy that food. Save favorite foods for when you feel good!
- Eat when you feel hungry. Keep ready-to-eat foods on hand since your hunger may last only a few minutes.
- For extra calories and protein, choose commercially prepared or homemade liquid nutritional supplements, nutritional bars and puddings, and nutritional beverages that are the consistency and flavor of fruit juice.
- Choose high-calorie foods, such as nuts and peanut butter. A small handful of nuts can have 200 calories or more.
- Don't fill up on liquids at meals. Instead, drink just enough at meals to swallow food comfortably while sipping on liquids between meals to stay hydrated.

Food Choices to Increase Calories

- Add butter, oil, or margarine to bread, potatoes, vegetables, or soup.
- Use larger-than-typical amounts of mayonnaise, salad dressing, and peanut butter.
- Choose calorie-rich drinks such as whole milk, juice, regular (not diet) soft drinks, chocolate milk, and instant breakfast drinks or other nutritional beverages.
- Make shakes with whole milk, ice cream, sherbet, flavored gelatin, fruit, instant breakfast mix, and/or chocolate.
- Add whipping cream to desserts, pancakes, waffles, fruit, and hot chocolate, and fold cream into soups and casseroles.

- Stock up on dairy foods that are quick and easy to eat, such as cheese, yogurt, pudding, ice cream, custard, pasteurized eggnog, and dips made with cheese, yogurt, sour cream, or cream cheese.
- Add sour cream to baked potatoes and vegetables.
- Sprinkle nuts or seeds on desserts such as fruit, ice cream, pudding, and custard.
- Add jelly, jam, or honey to bread and crackers.
- Top a slice of cake with jam and fruit and ice cream.

Food Choices to Increase Protein

- Keep hard-cooked eggs in the refrigerator. Use them to make egg salad or add them to green salads, casseroles, soups, and vegetable dishes.
- Enjoy an omelet, scrambled eggs, or fried eggs topped with cheese. Be sure eggs are well cooked to avoid the risk of harmful bacteria.
- Add cheese to potatoes, soups, and sandwiches.
- Spread peanut butter on fruit slices or toast.
- Add beans and peas to salads, soups, casseroles, and vegetable dishes.
- Snack on seeds, nuts, granola, or trail mix.
- Make fortified milk by blending 1 quart (4 cups) whole milk and 1 cup powdered nonfat dry milk. Chill at least 6 hours before using.
- Add protein powder or powdered milk to homemade milkshakes.
- Add leftover cooked meats to soups, casseroles, salads, and omelets.
- Mix diced or shredded meat with sour cream and spices to make a dip or sandwich spread.
- Add cottage cheese to fruit, omelets, baked potatoes, or casseroles.