



Tip Sheet: Nutrition to Manage Fatigue

Maintaining and optimizing your nutrition can help you:

- Prevent or reverse nutrient deficiencies (Ex. protein malnutrition)
- Preserve lean body mass
- Better tolerate treatments
- Minimize nutrition-related side effects and complications (nausea, vomiting and dehydration)
- Maintain strength and energy
- Protect immune function, decreasing the risk of infection
- Aid in recovery and healing
- Maximize quality of life

Fatigue can affect your interest in food and your ability to shop and prepare healthy meals.

Here are some suggestions that may help:

- Become familiar with your treatment, possible side effects (such as nausea and diarrhea) and ways of coping
- Make sure you get enough rest
- Save your favorite foods for days you are not receiving treatment so that, they won't be linked to an uncomfortable or distressing event
- Poor nutrition and not eating will increase your fatigue
- If you are not able to eat a normal size meal, eat small amounts frequently throughout the day
- Eat a balanced diet that includes protein choices like meat, poultry, fish, milk, beans, cheese, and/or tofu
- Be sure to drink plenty of fluids, about 8 to 10 cups per day
- If you are not able to eat much, choose liquids that are high in calories and/or protein, such as milk, juices, smoothies, milkshakes and nutrition supplements
- Stock the pantry and freezer with favorite foods so that you won't need to shop as often. Include foods you know you can eat when you are sick
- Keep foods handy that need little or no preparation, for example, pudding, peanut butter, tuna fish, cheese, eggs, frozen meals and nutritional supplements
- Do some cooking in advance and freeze in meal-sized portions
- Talk to friends or family members about helping with shopping and cooking. Or, ask a friend or family member to manage that job for you
- Take advantage of times when you do feel well, and have a larger meal then. Many people have a better appetite in the morning, when they are well rested

Please ask your physician to refer you to a dietitian if you:

- Have had minimal intake for 5 days or more
- Have difficulties with chewing or swallowing
- Are receiving tube feedings or IV nutrition (TPN)
- Have a pressure ulcer or skin breakdown
- Are not able to maintain weight
- Wish to see a dietitian about your nutrition concerns