

How to Manage Symptoms from Cancer Treatments

Symptoms from cancer treatments may make it hard to eat. These tips will help you manage your symptoms and meet your nutrient needs. You need adequate calorie and protein intake to help you keep your strength and energy up, maintain your weight and muscle mass, help you heal, and support your immune system while it recovers. If you have ongoing nutrition concerns, ask your healthcare team for an appointment with a Registered Dietitian.

Sore Mouth or Throat

- Choose bland, soft, moist foods at room temperature.
- Citrus fruits/juices, tomato products, spicy/salty foods, and rough/dry foods may cause pain.
- Ask your health care team about mouthwash and medicine they can prescribe that ease pain.

Dry Mouth

- Take sips of fluid throughout the day.
- Moisten foods with broth, soup, sauce, gravy, butter or margarine.
- Suck on ice chips, frozen pieces of fruit, Italian ice, and popsicles.
- Gum or sucking on candy may help.
- Try dry mouth products by Biotene[®], OraMoist[®], Orajel[®], MedActive[®], Act[®], and MighTeaFlow[®].

Altered Taste

- Try tart flavors like lemonade or citrus fruits. You can also try pickled foods like pickles, coleslaw, and olives.
- Add extra flavor to foods. Try spices or herbs, mustard, ketchup,

lemon/lime juice, sauces or dressings.

- If red meat tastes strange, try other proteins like chicken, turkey, fish, eggs, dairy products, beans, or tofu.
- Marinate or cook meats in sweet juices, acidic dressings or marinades.
- Try fruity, sweet or saltier flavors.
- If smells are bothersome, try foods that are cold or room temperature and avoid foods with strong odor.

Nausea

- Have crackers, toast, or dry cereal in the morning to help settle your stomach.
- Instead of large meals, eat small portions 1-3 hours apart.
- Avoid foods that are fatty, greasy or spicy.
- Select bland, mild foods.
- Avoid foods that are smelly or trigger nausea.

Diarrhea

- Take frequent sips of clear fluids.
- Choose bland, mild foods.
- Avoid foods that are fatty or greasy.
- Avoid caffeine and alcohol.
- If you think you are intolerant to dairy, avoid or limit dairy products like milk and ice cream. Try Lactaid[®] milk, soymilk, almond milk, yogurt, and mozzarella cheese sticks.

Who to Call

If you have more questions, please contact UW Health at one of the phone numbers listed. You can also visit our website at www.uwhealth.org/nutrition.

Nutrition clinics for UW Hospital and Clinics (UWHC) and American Family Children's Hospital (AFCH) can be reached at: **(608) 890-5500.**

For the UW Carbone Cancer Center: **(608) 265-1700.**

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 11/2023 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing HF#226.