

NUTRITION

A well-balanced diet provides you with all the nutrients needed to support your bodily functions which is why nutrition plays such an integral part in your cancer journey.



Adopting a balanced diet, prioritising protein and plant-based foods during and beyond treatment can help keep you strong, energised and preserve muscle mass. In fact, some treatments work better in people who are well-nourished. Your body is truly capable of wonderful things when you give it the proper building blocks it needs to recover and heal.

However, cancer and treatment may affect your sense of smell, appetite, and the ability to eat enough food or absorb nutrients which may result in malnutrition, causing you to feel weak and unable to fight infection, or finish treatment.

Moreover, with the overwhelming amount of online information you could compromise your nutrition and recovery process by cutting out important food groups, like carbohydrates or calcium-rich dairy products; both of which can be safely eaten throughout your cancer journey. Restrictive diets hinder recovery as they may heighten the effects of muscle loss, and it's advised to never replace whole foods with juicing or supplements.

While eating less refined sources of sugar is key to a healthy diet, cutting out alcohol is highly recommended as it's linked to many cancers. Reduce your overall red meat intake while cutting out processed meats altogether as research shows a significant link between colon cancer and preservatives in these meats.

Despite what you may have heard, there is no one pattern of eating that either directly causes or cures cancer therefore your goal should be to aim for balance. You can do this by adopting a diet rich in fruit and vegetables, wholegrains, and legumes (beans, peas and lentils), dairy or fortified alternatives, good quality lean meat and fish, or plant foods rich in protein, such as tofu.

Include heart healthy fats rich in omega 3 from olive oil, peanut butter as well as nuts and seeds. Befriend your freezer, meal plan and make use of batch cooking, slow cooking, one pot wonders, and grocery deliveries to make this time easier. Please don't be afraid to ask for support from loved ones, they are often more than happy to help.

If you are struggling to eat during treatment; it's best to consult with a registered dietitian.