



A Guide To Good Nutrition For People With Cancer

Getting the nutrients your body needs can be a challenge when you have cancer, such as multiple myeloma (a type of cancer that forms in the plasma cells within your bone marrow), but keeping up with good nutrition is important. This article will provide information and tips for how to get the nutrition you need, and will point you to resources for more in-depth guidance.

KEY POINTS

1. Eating well can help you feel better and stay stronger when you have cancer
2. Your body needs a variety of nutrients, most of which you can get from eating a balanced diet
3. You can take steps to prepare for your nutrition needs and reduce your risk of infections with proper food safety

THE BENEFITS OF EATING WELL WITH CANCER

Getting the nutrients your body needs can be a challenge when you have cancer, such as multiple myeloma (a type of cancer that forms in the plasma cells within your bone marrow). The cancer itself, and some treatments for it, can affect the way your body tolerates certain foods and uses nutrients. But keeping up with good nutrition is important. Eating well—and staying as physically active as you can—may help you keep up your strength and energy, maintain your weight and muscle mass, help tolerate side effects of treatment, reduce your risk of infection with proper food safety, and feel better overall.

This article may help you in planning for your nutrition needs. The links at the end of the article will take you to more in-depth guidelines from the American Cancer Society.

IMPORTANT NUTRIENTS AND WHERE TO GET THEM

Your body needs a variety of nutrients to stay strong when you have cancer. Some of the most important nutrients, and their food sources, are included in the table below. Remember that each person's nutrient needs are unique. Talk with your healthcare team about your individual nutrition needs.

NUTRIENT	WHAT IT DOES	BEST SOURCES
Protein	Helps to repair body tissue, strengthen your immune system, and fight infections	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fish• Poultry (chicken, turkey)• Lean red meat• Eggs• Low-fat dairy• Nuts• Dried beans, peas, and lentils• Soy



NUTRIENT	WHAT IT DOES	BEST SOURCES
Fats (4 kinds: monounsaturated, polyunsaturated, saturated, and trans-fatty acids)	Help your body store energy, insulate body tissue, and transport vitamins through your blood	<p>Monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats (choose these more)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Vegetable oils (olive, canola, peanut, safflower, sunflower, corn, and flaxseed oils)• Seafood <p>Saturated fats (limit amount)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lean meat• Poultry (chicken, turkey)• Milk• Cheese• Butter• Vegetable oils (coconut, palm kernel, and palm oils) <p>Avoid trans-fatty acids (found in processed snack foods, as well as some packaged baked goods and dairy products) as much as possible</p>
Carbohydrates	<p>Give your body energy to help your organs function properly and allow you to be physically active; also supply cells with important vitamins, minerals, fiber, and phytonutrients</p> <p>Fiber helps with keeping stool soft and moving food waste out of your body</p> <p>Phytonutrients (plant-based nutrients) may help to promote health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fruits• Vegetables• Beans• Whole grains (quinoa, brown rice, barley, whole grain or whole wheat breads, cereals, and flour)
Water	Keeps your body hydrated so your cells can function properly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water• Other liquids (like soups and milk)



EATING A BALANCED DIET

In general, you'll want to get as many nutrients as possible from eating a balanced diet. Research suggests maintaining a diet including:

- Lots of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains
- Baked, broiled, or poached fish and poultry (chicken or turkey)
- Limited to no processed meats (bacon, sausage, hot dogs, or lunch meats)
- Small amounts of lean red meat (lean cuts of beef, pork, or lamb)
- Non-fat or low-fat dairy products (instead of full-fat dairy)
- Nuts and olive oil (instead of butter or margarine)

If you are thinking about taking a vitamin or other dietary or herbal supplement, be sure to talk with your doctor first. Some supplements can affect the way some treatments work, and some can contain potentially harmful ingredients.

PREPARING FOR NUTRITION NEEDS DURING CANCER TREATMENT

Some treatments for cancer can cause side effects that may affect your nutrition needs or your ability to eat a balanced diet. Side effects may include:

- Loss of appetite
- Sore or dry mouth or throat
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Changes in taste or smell

Although you can't predict which side effects—if any—you may experience, you can take some steps to prepare in advance and gain a sense of control:

- Research treatments and their possible side effects, so you know what to expect
- Talk to your healthcare team about your concerns, and ask about dietary changes to help manage side effects like nausea or diarrhea. Your healthcare team can offer advice, or prescribe medicines if needed, to help you boost your appetite and manage side effects
- Stock up on your favorite foods—especially those that may be easier to tolerate
- Ask a friend or family member to help coordinate support with shopping and meal preparation
- Meet with a registered dietician who has experience working with people with cancer. You can ask your healthcare team to refer you to a dietician



FOOD SAFETY TIPS TO REDUCE YOUR RISK OF INFECTION

People with multiple myeloma are about 15 times more likely to get an infection than people without multiple myeloma. And multiple myeloma patients who get an infection often respond slowly to treatment of the infection. So it's very important to follow proper food safety.

These tips can help you reduce the risk of infection from the foods you eat:

- Always wash your hands before and after preparing food, and before eating each meal. Rub your hands with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds
- Refrigerate or freeze all perishable foods within 2 hours of buying them (within 1 hour for foods containing eggs, cream, or mayonnaise). Your refrigerator should be kept at a maximum of 40°F
- Wash all vegetables and fruits well before eating
- Handle raw foods (meat, poultry, fish, and eggs) carefully. Keep them away from other foods, and be sure to clean anything that comes into contact with raw foods (like knives, cutting boards, countertops, or sponges)
- Follow directions—and use a thermometer—to make sure you're cooking foods like meat, poultry, and fish to the proper temperatures. And keep any hot foods that may be sitting out a while at 140°F or warmer
- Avoid the following foods, which are more likely to contain bacteria that can make you sick: raw honey, raw milk, raw fruit juice, sushi, salad bars, and raw or undercooked meats, fish, poultry, or eggs

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON NUTRITION FOR PEOPLE WITH CANCER, VISIT:

The American Cancer Society nutrition guides, including:

[Lifestyle Changes That Make a Difference: Nutrition and Physical Activity Guidelines for Cancer Survivors](#)

[Nutrition for the Person With Cancer During Treatment: A Guide for Patients and Families](#)

[Nutrition and Physical Activity During and After Cancer Treatment: Answers to Common Questions](#)

Information about these independent organizations is provided as an additional resource for obtaining information related to cancer. It does not indicate endorsement by Celgene Corporation of an organization or its communications.

Your healthcare team is your best source of information.

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