

Poor Appetite or Weight Loss

Loss of appetite and changes in your eating habits may occur during treatment. Having enough calories, protein, and fluids is how your body works best. This is **not** the appropriate time for weight loss. Excess weight loss can decrease your immune function, delay healing, and may cause weakness and fatigue. Eating as well as you can is an important part of taking care of yourself during cancer treatment.

Our goal for you is to have as much strength and energy as you can during treatment.

What to Do

- Eat small meals or snacks every 2-3 hours.
 - Hard-cooked eggs
 - Peanut butter and jelly sandwich
 - Cheese or peanut butter crackers
 - Ice cream, pudding, yogurt
 - Granola bars or trail mix
 - Canned tuna or chicken with mayonnaise
 - Mini bagel with cream cheese
- Set an alarm as a reminder to get something to eat or drink. Setting an alarm on a cell phone or stove. Set it for every 3-4 hours as a reminder to eat.
- Keep nonperishable snacks such as chocolate and nuts around the house where you spend your time. If you have a favorite chair, keep cheese crackers on a table within arm's reach.
- Eat any foods any time of the day; if you love breakfast foods, eat them for breakfast, lunch and dinner.
- Start with small, dessert sized plates and go back for more if desired. Sometimes using a smaller plate reduces the stress of feeling like you have to eat a large amount.
- Drinking large amounts of water may curb your appetite. Drink most of your liquids between meals. Use small sips of liquid if needed to help swallow for dry mouth.
- Limit intake of low-calorie beverages. Instead, choose caffeine-free, drinks with calories such as fruit or vegetable juice, Gatorade, ginger ale, milk, etc.
- Save time and energy by using prepared foods. Choose frozen meals, canned soups, canned fruit, or take out.
- If eating at the table is too stressful, try eating on the couch while watching TV. Sometimes doing the opposite of what is usually recommended, is what you need right now.
- Add commercial liquid supplements in between meals as snacks. (Ensure, Boost, Glucerna, Carnation, store brand products are just as good)
- Sometimes eating a small meal is too stressful. To reduce this stress, drink a liquid supplement as a meal. Try to drink 4-5 of these drinks a day (Ensure, Boost, store brand)

High Calorie, High Protein Foods

Milk products:

- Eat cheese on toast or with crackers
- Add grated cheddar cheese to baked potatoes, vegetables, soups and noodles
- Use milk for cooking in place of water for hot cereal and cream soups. Include cream sauces on vegetables and pasta
- Add powdered milk to cream soups and mashed potatoes, puddings and casseroles
- Add full fat yogurt or cottage cheese to favorite fruits or blended smoothies

Eggs:

- Keep hard-cooked eggs in the refrigerator
- Chop and add to salads, casseroles, soups, and vegetables
- Make a quick egg salad
- All eggs should be well cooked to avoid the risk of harmful bacteria

Meats, poultry, and fish:

- Add leftover cooked meats to soups, casseroles, salads, and omelets
- Mix diced and flaked meat with sour cream and spices to make dip

Beans, legumes, nuts, and seeds:

- Sprinkle nuts on desserts such as fruit, ice cream, pudding, and custard
- Add nuts and seeds to salads
- Spread peanut butter on toast and fruit or blend in a milkshake

Snacks, Desserts:

- Mix Ensure, Boost, etc, with ice cream or mix with fruit and yogurt for a smoothie
- Glass of whole milk with cookies
- Add whipped cream to fruit, jello, or pudding
- Custard and pudding come in small single-servings packs

Extra calories:

- Use full fat products such as milk, yogurt and cheese
- Add 2 tbsp dry milk powder to increase protein and calorie content of: cereal, soup, hamburgers, cottage cheese, casseroles, yogurt, eggs, mashed potatoes
- Melt extra butter or margarine into warm foods, like potatoes, rice, vegetables, etc.
- Add sour cream or gravy to food for extra flavor and calories
- Use extra mayonnaise in tuna and chicken salad, butter on bread or toast or extra dressing on salad
- Add crackers, oatmeal, rice, or barley to soups, add croutons to salads.
- Add whipped cream to your coffee, cake, or ice cream