

Cancer, Nutrition, and You: Where to Start?

Feeding your body what it needs during cancer treatment is very important.

Those who have undergone or are currently going through cancer treatment know that eating can be a challenge for multiple reasons. It's common for patients to not be hungry, lack a desire to eat, and become full quickly. It is also typical to develop symptoms that make eating uncomfortable (e.g., nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, constipation, mouth sores) or unsatisfying (e.g., changing taste of food). It is for these reasons that many patients experience malnutrition during treatment.

Weight loss is a sign of malnutrition. Malnutrition is associated with a reduced response to cancer treatment, survival, and quality of life.



Start with getting enough calories, protein, and hydration.

Start with getting enough calories, protein, and hydration

Get enough calories

- Eat often throughout the day (even in small amounts).
- Add high calorie “extras” such as sour cream, cheese, nuts, avocados, oils, butter, cream, etc. to foods you are already eating.
- Drink your calories (juice, milk, nutrition supplements), but not with food so as not to fill your stomach up.

Choose protein sources

- Choose a variety of meat, poultry, fish, legumes, milk, yogurt, eggs, etc. as you are able.
- If you need to gain weight, try nuts and nut butters (e.g., peanut butter, almond butter, sunflower butter).

Ensure proper hydration

- Sip fluids throughout the day—ask your registered dietitian which beverages are best.



Virginia Cancer
Specialists

Eating and Cancer: Top Tips

1. Follow these recommendations following a cancer diagnosis, if you are not having symptoms that are affecting your eating and digestion
2. Be a healthy weight
3. Be physically active
4. Eat a diet rich in whole grains, vegetables, fruits, and beans
5. Limit intake of “fast foods” and other processed foods high in fat, starches, or added sugar
6. Limit intake of red and processed meat
7. Limit intake of sugar-sweetened drinks
8. Limit alcohol consumption
9. Do not use supplements for cancer prevention

Much information exists in books and on the Internet. It is very easy to find scary, and oftentimes inaccurate, information online. Common areas for misinformation include the relationship between sugar and cancer, alkaline/acidic foods, and use of various dietary supplements.

Our goal at Virginia Cancer Specialists (VCS) is to help you find ways to get the nutrition your body needs in a way that works with your medical history, preferences, and lifestyle. By offering Nutrition Services at VCS, we provide:

- Individualized nutrition recommendations;
- Support in maintaining or gaining weight during treatment or addressing weight gain related to treatment;
- Help managing cancer and treatment symptoms that affect your ability to eat well;
- Up-to-date information on nutrition in cancer survivorship.



Virginia Cancer Specialists Nutrition Team

Giuliana Klesius and Shelley Maniscalco:
Registered Dietitians.

**Need more specific, tailored information?
Call today to schedule an appointment to
see one of our dietitians:**

Patients are seen in Arlington, Alexandria, Fairfax, Gainesville, Loudoun, and Woodbridge. Appointments can be made by calling 703-208-3155.



Virginia Cancer Specialists © all rights reserved. Our Practice complies with the Office for Civil Rights and does not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability. View the notice by visiting: virginiacancerspecialists.com/non-discrimination.

Ask your doctor, nurse practitioner, or nurse if you should schedule a consult with a Virginia Cancer Specialists dietitian.