

Resources

Susan G. Komen®

1-877 GO KOMEN

(1-877-465-6636)

komen.org

National Cancer Institute Eating Hints:

Before, During and After

Cancer Treatments

www.cancer.gov/

cancerinfo/eatinghints

Related educational resources:

- [Complementary and Integrative Therapies](#)
- [Making Breast Cancer Treatment Decisions](#)



Eating well during treatment

As you go through breast cancer treatment, it's a good idea to eat a healthy diet. Be sure to eat a variety of foods: breads and grains, fruits, vegetables and dairy. At times, you may need to eat more protein such as chicken, fish or beans. High-protein foods and plenty of calories will give your body the energy it needs to help get you through treatment.

Some people may have a hard time eating during treatment. Ask your doctor to refer you to a registered dietitian (RD) or nutritionist. He or she can help you if you are having trouble eating.

A word about... weight gain

Weight gain is a common side effect of chemotherapy, especially in women who go into early menopause.

Also, changes in metabolism from chemotherapy and a less active lifestyle can cause you to gain weight. Fluid retention (your body holding water) and an increased appetite from other medications may sometimes cause weight gain, as well.

Women who gain weight usually put on about 5-15 pounds. The more weight a woman gains, the less likely she is to return to her pre-diagnosis weight.

A healthy diet and exercise may help prevent weight gain.

Let your doctor know if you notice any big weight changes. He or she will look into what is causing this change and give you advice.

A word about... nutrition supplements

Talk with your doctor before taking a nutrition (dietary) supplement. Some may interfere with your breast cancer treatment.

Most people who go through breast cancer treatment don't need to take a nutrition supplement. You can usually get what you need by making a few changes to your diet.



For more information, visit komen.org or call Susan G. Komen's breast care helpline at 1-877 GO KOMEN (1-877-465-6636) Monday through Friday, 9 AM to 10 PM ET.

Common concerns

Treatment may cause side effects that can affect your diet. If you have any of the side effects listed below, be sure to tell your doctor or RD. The tips listed under each side effect may also help.

I have nausea and vomiting.

- Talk with your doctor about medications that can help.
- Eat 4-6 small meals each day.
- Try ginger tea, ginger ale or crystallized ginger, or add fresh [ginger](#) when you are cooking.
- Drink lemonade or lemon water.
- Eat bland, easy-to-digest foods that don't have an odor.
- Eat cool or frozen foods. These may have fewer odors than warmer foods.
- Avoid foods that are spicy, fried, very greasy or very sweet.
- Cook and freeze meals to reheat during times when you feel nauseous. Reheating causes fewer odors than cooking.
- Open the windows to keep fresh air flowing. Use an overhead fan to decrease cooking odors.
- Take walks (when you can) to get fresh air.
- Talk with your health care provider about [complementary and integrative therapies](#) (such as [acupressure](#), [acupuncture](#), [relaxation techniques](#), [hypnosis](#), [guided imagery](#) and [music therapy](#)) that may help

Foods just don't taste or smell the same.

- Try tart foods, like lemon pudding, or try stronger seasonings, like oregano and rosemary.
- Avoid strong smelling meat, such as beef. Try chicken, turkey or eggs.

My mouth and throat are very sore.

- Talk to your doctor about medications that can help.
- Eat softer foods such as mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese, milkshakes, pudding or applesauce.
- Eat foods at room temperature. Foods that are too hot can make your sore mouth feel worse.

My mouth is really dry.

- Suck on hard candy or eat popsicles or fruit juice bars. They help produce more saliva.
- Add gravy, broth and sauces to your foods.

Diarrhea is a problem for me.

- Talk with your doctor about medications that can help.
- Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day. Water, broth and juice are good choices.
- Eat foods low in fiber such as pasta, cottage cheese, yogurt, white bread and smooth peanut butter. Your doctor may recommend the BRAT diet (bananas, rice, applesauce and toast).
- Avoid milk and other dairy products.

I'm constipated.

- Drink plenty of fluids every day.
- Eat high-fiber foods such as whole grain breads, fresh fruits and vegetables, brown rice and beans.
- Take a stool softener.



The list of resources is only a suggested resource and is not a complete listing of breast health and breast cancer materials or information. The information contained herein is not meant to be used for self-diagnosis or to replace the services of a medical professional. Komen does not endorse, recommend or make any warranties or representations regarding the accuracy, completeness, timeliness, quality or non-infringement of any of the materials, products or information provided by the organizations referenced herein.