



Living with cancer and improving nutrition.

'Food is medicine' said Hippocrates

What you eat can really improve how you feel and this is particularly true when living alongside cancer, whether you are still on treatment, living beyond treatment or whether cancer is progressing. There is no evidence that any single food will help you beat cancer, so these guidelines are about balance and enjoyment!

The goals of improved nutrition are to:

Keep up your strength and energy.

Strengthen the immune system and balance the body chemistry.

Help the body to recover and heal.

Keep up or improve your quality of life to allow you to get on with what's important to you.

Simple guidelines.

Choose foods that provide you with enough calories to maintain your weight.

Choose protein to help rebuild tissues that cancer treatment may harm – fish, eggs, white meat.

Choose food high in nutrients such as vitamins and minerals – whole grains, pulses, nuts and seeds.

Limit the amount of red meat and dairy products to 3-4 times per week.

Drink water essential for your body's functioning.

Eat small, frequent meals every 3 hours.

Avoid empty calories such as low calorie fizzy drinks.

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Try to eat when you are feeling the best, no matter what time of day.

Try to increase your appetite through light exercise.

Organic food has no added chemicals and will therefore be easier for your body to process.

Low sugar – many feel that a low sugar diet is of benefit.

Low salt – similarly try not to add too much salt to your food.

Fruit and vegetables – raw or juiced, rather than cooked - save all the nutrients.

Antioxidants. These protect cells from damage and are found naturally in foods from plant sources.

Vitamin E is in corn, wheat germ and nuts e.g. almonds.

Vitamin C is in kiwi, citrus fruits (oranges, grapefruit, and lemons), strawberries, melon and broccoli.

Selenium is in Brazil nuts, seafood and chicken breasts.

Zinc is in chicken, beans, nuts, whole grains.

Phytochemicals. These are found in plant sources and play a vital role in a healthy diet and the best way to include these is to eat a mix of rainbow colored fruit and vegetables.

Vegetables: leeks, chives, onion, garlic, broccoli, spinach, tomatoes (including ketchup!) and carrots.

Fruit: black grapes, plums, blueberries, oranges, apricots, mango, apple, raspberries, watermelon.

Supplements that may help.

A good multivitamin, fish oil, a pro-biotic and Spirulina.

Other foods that may help.

Flaxseed oil, turmeric, ginger, green tea, a little dark chocolate and even a glass of red wine!