



Nutrition and Lung Cancer

Before, During and After Treatment

Many people diagnosed with lung cancer experience fatigue, a lack of appetite, weight loss, taste changes, nausea, sore mouth or throat and difficulty breathing.

Maintaining your weight will help you keep up your energy and strength. It will also help you tolerate your treatment better. You can contact a BCCA Registered Dietitian (please see phone numbers on last page) if you are losing weight or are having difficulty finding foods you can tolerate.

1. If you are not feeling hungry...

- **Have small frequent meals and snacks** of high calorie, high protein foods.



- **Make every mouthful you eat count** by limiting low calorie food and fluid (i.e. use cream soup instead of broth, or try Ovaltine® instead of coffee/tea).

- **Eat when your appetite is best.** If you have more energy and your appetite is better in the morning have

your larger meal at breakfast, and have smaller meals and snacks throughout the rest of the day.



2. If you are feeling tired or having difficulty breathing...

- **Convenience foods** such as frozen or ready to eat meals to help make food preparation easier and leave you with energy to eat!
- **Let family or friends help** make the **foods you like**, or go out to eat and order small or half portions.
- **Choose soft foods or fluids** that take less effort to chew and swallow.

3. If food tastes different (bitter, metallic, sweeter than normal)

- **Try rinsing your mouth with baking soda and water** (1/4 tsp to 1 cup) before your meals.



- **Try mild tasting foods** such as mashed potatoes, bread and butter, hot cereal, rice, plain pasta and milk.
- **Try marinating** bitter or metallic tasting **meat** in soy sauce or sweet fruit juice.
- **If you are currently smoking**, we recommend that you quit smoking. This will make food taste better and may help you to gain weight and tolerate your treatment better.

4. If you have a sore, dry mouth or throat...

- **Avoid foods that are acidic, too hot or cold, spicy, rough or too dry.**
- For a sore mouth, **choose smooth, creamy foods** like cream soups, custard, puddings, dessert tofu, milkshakes and hot cereals.
- **Use pain medications** before eating, as prescribed by your doctor.
- For a dry mouth, **have soft, moist foods** such as crustless sandwiches with soft fillings, pasta dishes with extra sauce, stews, omelets, potato salad, cottage cheese and fruit salad and French toast.
- **Drink 8-10 cups of fluid each day.** Limit coffee, tea and cola drinks as they may cause more dryness.

5. If you are feeling nauseated...

- **Sip fluids often** throughout the day. Aim for 8-10 cups of fluid daily. Good choices are gingerale, lemonade, broth, popsicles and Jell-O®.
- **Eat dry starchy foods** every 1-2 hours, as tolerated. Try crackers, toast, breadsticks, dry cereal, rice or bagels.
- Take your **anti-nausea medications** as prescribed.



6. Do you have questions about vitamins?

- If you feel you are not able to eat a well balanced diet, a **multivitamin with minerals** may be needed. Your dietitian can help you decide if you need a supplement and help you choose one that will best meet your needs.

7. Are you following a special diet?

- If you have been following a **special diet** (example: for Diabetes or High Cholesterol), you can speak with your dietitian about changes to help you meet your nutrition needs at this time.

This information is not meant to replace the medical counsel of your doctor or individual consultation with a registered dietitian. This information may only be used in its entirety.