

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. If you are losing weight or are having difficulty finding foods you can tolerate, ask to speak with a BCCA Dietitian.

1. Poor Appetite

- **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. Fatigue

- **Use 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. Taste Changes

- **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. Difficulty Chewing or Swallowing

- **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. Nausea

- **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. 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.

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