

# NUTRITION: COMMON EATING PROBLEMS

After completing cancer treatment, most eating-related side effects go away. However, some may last. The following tips can help:



## Nutrition Help

Cancer survivors with questions or concerns about nutrition should talk to a doctor, nurse, or dietitian. A registered dietitian can be one of the best sources of information.

For more information or to find a registered dietitian, contact the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics at [eatright.org](http://eatright.org).

## Dehydration

- Take in plenty of fluids, especially if losing fluid through vomiting or diarrhea.

## Weight Loss

- Eat several small meals and snacks throughout the day to help boost calorie intake, maintain weight, increase energy and strength, and to help heal.
- Try to eat high-calorie and high-protein foods at each meal and snack.
- Take a walk or lightly exercise before meals to increase appetite.

## Nausea

- Avoid food odors. Stay out of the kitchen during meal preparation, if possible.
- Try cold foods to avoid strong smells, or allow food to cool down before eating.
- Avoid greasy, fried, high-fat, sweet, or spicy foods.
- Drink liquids between meals instead of with meals.
- Eat several small meals rather than fewer large meals.

## Lack of Appetite

- Eat several small meals rather than fewer large meals.
- Keep snacks readily available.
- Avoid filling up on fluids with no calories, such as coffee or tea. Choose low-fat milk, 100% vegetable or fruit juice, or smoothies.

## Changes in Taste or Smell

- Try different foods to find what tastes best.
- Marinate foods to improve their flavor.
- Counter a salty or bitter taste with added sweeteners and a sweet taste with added lemon juice or salt.

## Dry Mouth

- Drink plenty of liquids.
- Sip water often.
- Suck on ice chips.

## Sore Mouth or Throat

- Choose soft, wet, and easy to swallow foods.
- Blend food to make it easier to swallow.
- Avoid crunchy, salty, spicy, or sugary foods.
- Avoid alcohol.

# References & Resources

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Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, Chemotherapy and Diet

<https://www.eatright.org/health/diseases-and-conditions/cancer/chemotherapy-and-diet>

American Cancer Society, Eating Well After Treatment

<http://www.cancer.org/treatment/survivorship-during-and-after-treatment/staying-active/nutrition/after-treatment-ends.html>

American Cancer Society, Eating Well During Treatment

<http://www.cancer.org/treatment/survivorship-during-and-after-treatment/staying-active/nutrition/once-treatment-starts.html>

American Cancer Society, Managing Eating Problems Caused by Cancer Treatments

<http://www.cancer.org/treatment/survivorship-during-and-after-treatment/staying-active/nutrition/common-problems.html>

National Cancer Institute, Side Effects of Cancer Treatment

<https://www.cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/side-effects>

To find a dietitian near you that specializes in cancer, use the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics search tool at:

<https://www.eatright.org/find-an-expert>

Visit [health.mo.gov/cancer](http://health.mo.gov/cancer) for more important tips on surviving cancer.



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Information Provided in Partnership With the MDHSS Section for Community Health Services and Initiatives