



CANCER
INFAMILY
— build knowledge



WEIGHT

This leaflet discusses how to keep a healthy weight, as changes in weight during treatment are not uncommon. Ask your doctor if you should expect this side effect from your therapies.

PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLETS DO NOT REPLACE THE INFORMATION, ADVICE AND SUPPORT PROVIDED BY YOUR DOCTOR.

Maintaining a healthy weight

Weight loss

Some medication (e.g. some antidepressants) can cause weight loss. Nausea, loss of taste, or sores in the mouth and throat can decrease your appetite or prevent you from eating. The same can happen if you are tired or depressed.

Good nutrition is crucial, as it is to maintain your weight, because cancer is a disease that takes much from the body. To keep your body in good condition also contributes to treatment success.

If you lack appetite, try changing your habits:

- ✗ Order a takeout, try different ones.
 - ✗ Have light meals or snacks whenever you feel like. You are not
- obliged to follow a 3-meals diet every day.
 - ✗ Try a varied (but always balanced) diet, experiment with new foods and recipes.
 - ✗ Take a walk before meals whenever possible, this can increase your appetite.
 - ✗ Change your routine. For example, eat at candlelight or in a different place.
 - ✗ Eat with friends or family. Distract yourself during the meals with a radio or TV.



CHANGES IN TASTE

A metallic taste in the mouth is a common side effect of some treatments. Food may also become tasteless or even have an unpleasant flavor.

What you can do:

- ✘ Try chewing gum.
- ✘ Suck on candy to hide the metallic taste.
- ✘ Avoid foods with unpleasant tastes.
- ✘ Ask your doctor or nurse for help finding a nutritionist who can help.



Weight gain

Some patients, in particular women, have a tendency to gain weight during chemotherapy. This can be linked to fatigue, since less activity means fewer burned calories. It can also result from eating more carbohydrates as these can alleviate nausea, or just because they feel that losing weight equals being sicker. In some women, weight gain can also be related to changes in metabolism, for example the onset of menopause.

What can you do?

Stay active but only light workouts, you don't want to be too tired. Follow a balanced diet with all the nutrients your body needs. This means:

- ✘ Have foods from all the 5 nutritional groups (1-vegetables and legumes/beans, 2-fruit, 3-grain cereal foods, preferentially wholegrain and high fiber, 4-meat, fish, poultry, eggs, etc. and 5-milk, yoghurt cheese and/or alternatives);

- ✘ Eat plenty of calories to maintain a stable weight.
- ✘ Eat enough proteins to rebuild and maintain your skin, hair, muscles and organs.
- ✘ Drink extra fluids to protect your bladder and kidneys during treatment.

"Ask your doctor or a nutritionist to help you planning a proper diet."



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