

To Stay in the Game, Maintain Your Frame



Cancer Health Tips: Nutrition and Physical Activity

Nutritionist Avis Graham Ph.D, RD, LDN provides some tips on good nutrition and staying active after a person has been diagnosed with a cancer, such as multiple myeloma, which is a blood cancer of the plasma cells found in the bone. This content is for informational purposes only and is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. It is important to consult with a physician before making any diet or lifestyle changes.

While healthy eating and staying active is important for everyone, it is especially critical for people living with cancer. Eating the right amount of calories may help cancer patients feel more energetic. For multiple myeloma patients specifically, because the disease can lead to bone complications such as weakened bones and fractures, proper nutrition is important. Staying active may also have positive physiological and psychological effects on people living with cancer.

Nutrition

Below are some general nutrition tips multiple myeloma patients may consider to ensure proper nutrition:

- To maintain bone health, eat foods enriched with Vitamin D and calcium, such as egg yolks, fatty fish (e.g., salmon and tuna), and milk with vitamin D
- Consult with your doctor to determine if you should take any nutritional supplements
- Eat snacks and small meals every couple of hours to increase the intake of calories
- To gain weight, add dairy products such as grated cheese and powdered milk to meals and choose the full-fat versions of salad dressing
- Purchase bland, as well as soft foods, such as pudding, soup and yogurt, prior to your cancer treatment, in case you experience nausea or sore throat and mouth as side effects
- High calorie, high protein drinks can also increase your nutritional intake when appetite is poor
- Avoid raw foods such as salads, seafood and soft cheeses if you have a low white blood count
- Be diligent about washing fruits and veggies. Properly cooking meats, avoiding cross contamination and keeping a clean kitchen are important steps to prevent infections

Staying Active

Research shows that being active may help relieve stress, increase energy and reduce nausea and pain in cancer patients. Patients should consult with their doctor prior to the start of any physical activity and determine if activities such as walking, yoga, or swimming may help.

For people with multiple myeloma, it is especially critical to maintain bone health, and like muscles, bones becomes stronger with exercise. Good exercises for healthy bones are weight-bearing, including activities such as walking, yoga, or swimming. Try to get about 30 minutes of exercise a day.

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References

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