

NUTRITIONAL MANAGEMENT DURING ORAL, HEAD AND NECK CANCER TREATMENT

Treatment for oral, head and neck cancer can cause side effects, including weight loss, fatigue, nausea, diarrhea, constipation, low blood counts, and increased risk of infection.

These side effects can inhibit your ability to stay nourished and interfere with your treatment. In addition, depending upon your treatment plan, you may experience discomfort and pain in chewing and swallowing. Here are some recommendations to help you stay nourished.

THINK “SOFT” DIET

- Opt for soft and moist foods, which can help alleviate some of the painful side effects of eating during and after treatment.
- Invest in a blender to puree fruits and vegetables and create soups.

MAINTAIN HYDRATION

- Be sure to drink plenty of water and liquids to minimize dry mouth symptoms.

DISCUSS NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTS WITH YOUR DOCTOR

- Vitamin supplements, especially vitamins D and B, are important.
- Zinc may stimulate taste.

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WHIP UP PROTEIN SHAKES

- Add plenty of protein to your diet to help meet nutritional needs.
- Make shakes or smoothies with protein powder, milk, soy milk, or rice milk, and add a flavorful fruit.
- Look for a protein powder that contains whey.

ADD CANCER-FIGHTING FOODS

- Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables. Phytochemicals from plants build up the immune system and help fight infections.
- Red berries and green tea are beneficial in a cancer-fighting diet.

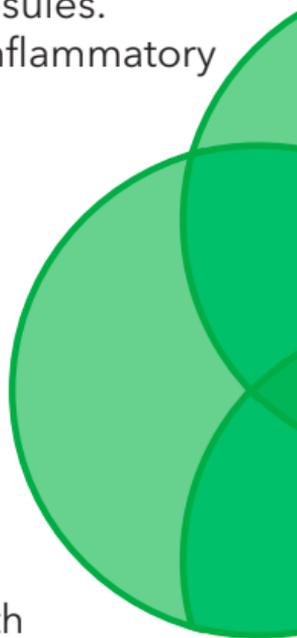
CONSIDER FISH OIL

- Fish oils contain fatty acids that are an important part of the oral, head and neck cancer diet.
- Fish oils come in liquid or capsules.
- Fish oils contain natural anti-inflammatory properties.
- Fish oils promote healing and help maintain weight.

AVOID FOODS THAT CAUSE DISCOMFORT

- Avoid foods that are sharp, crunchy, or require a lot of chewing.
- Limit foods that are spicy or acidic as they can cause mouth pain.
- Eliminate drinks or foods that contain alcohol.

Check with your doctor for more information.



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