

Good nutrition is an important part of any healthy lifestyle. A cancer diagnosis can make it difficult to keep a healthy diet. Your loved one might have various side effects depending on the type of treatment. These side effects may include nausea, fatigue, vomiting, loss of appetite, dental changes, depression, and others. If you and your loved one are concerned about these side effects, please talk to the doctor or dietitian for assistance.

It is important to find a balance between supporting your loved one and meeting your nutritional needs. This may include different eating times/routines or having different foods than your loved one. It is common for caregivers to feel guilty for eating normally while their loved one is not. It is important to take care of yourself while supporting your loved one.

In addition to physical symptoms, pay attention to emotional factors that might affect your loved one's appetite. Sometimes fear, depression and loneliness can affect a person's appetite and cause problems for overall health and well-being. It is easier said than done but eating properly and understanding how nutrition affects your loved one's health can make a difference, during both treatment and recovery. Below are some tips for you and your loved one to help better manage eating and nutrition.

- **Talk to health providers.** Talk with providers about any concerns and questions about diet, whether they're physical or emotional. Everyone's cancer experience, food preferences, and lifestyles are different. It is important to have a good nutritional plan.
- **Ask your loved one about food preferences.** Your loved one's desire to eat may decrease due to the side effects of cancer treatment. It is important to eat healthy, but also eat foods that they enjoy.
- **Eat when and where they are comfortable.** Try to eat in areas that may make it easier or more pleasant for you loved one with cancer. Their appetite may vary from yours, which may make their mealtimes different from yours. You can ask family to sit with them. Or adjust family mealtime so they don't have to eat alone. Ensure that you can also enjoy a healthy meal with social time.



[www.CancerSupportCommunity.org](http://www.CancerSupportCommunity.org)  
1-888-793-9355



- **Keep a food journal.** A journal is a great tool to help track your loved one's diet, eating schedule, and food preferences. This may also help connect any changes in diet with new treatments or physical/emotional changes.
- **Avoid power struggles.** Do not criticize eating habits. Encourage your loved one to eat any time they feel up to eating.
- **Be supportive in social settings.** Food and eating are a large part of social activities. Your loved one may eat more during social activities or avoid these settings if eating is challenging. Social time may be important to you and provide you some rest. So work together for a compromise.

- **Anticipate varied likes/dislikes.** It is not uncommon for people with cancer's taste buds to change. You should try to be supportive of different requests. Or suggest different options than your loved one used to eat.

For more information on eating well during and after cancer treatment, visit **www.**

**CancerSupportCommunity.org/diet-nutrition.**

# General Cancer Information, Survivorship & Support

**Cancer Support Community** • 888-793-9355 • [www.CancerSupportCommunity.org](http://www.CancerSupportCommunity.org)

**American Cancer Society** • 800-227-2345 • [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

**CancerCare** • 800-813-4673 • [www.cancercare.org](http://www.cancercare.org)

**Cancer.net** • 888-651-3038 • [www.cancer.net](http://www.cancer.net)

**Caregiver Action Network** • 855-227-3640 • [www.caregiveraction.org](http://www.caregiveraction.org)

**Healthcare.gov** • [www.healthcare.gov](http://www.healthcare.gov)

**Livestrong Foundation** • 866-673-7205 • [www.livestrong.org](http://www.livestrong.org)

**National Cancer Institute** • 800-422-6237 • [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)

**National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine** • 888-644-6226 • [www.nccam.nih.gov](http://www.nccam.nih.gov)

**Patient Advocate Foundation** • 800-532-5274 • [www.patientadvocate.org](http://www.patientadvocate.org)

## Cancer Support Community Resources

**Cancer Support Community's** (CSC) resources and programs are available free of charge. Call 888-793-9355 or visit [www.CancerSupportCommunity.org](http://www.CancerSupportCommunity.org) for more info.

**Cancer Support Helpline**® — Have questions, concerns or looking for resources? Call CSC's toll-free Cancer Support Helpline (888-793-9355), available in 200 languages Mon–Fri, 9 am–9 pm ET.

**Open to Options**® — Preparing for your next appointment? Our trained specialists can help you create a list of questions to share with your doctor. Make an appointment by calling 888-793-9355 or by contacting your local CSC or Gilda's Club.

**Frankly Speaking About Cancer**® — Trusted information for cancer patients and their loved ones is available through publications, online, and in-person programs. [www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/FranklySpeakingAboutCancer](http://www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/FranklySpeakingAboutCancer).

**Services at Local CSCs and Gilda's Clubs** — With the help of 170 locations, CSC and Gilda's Club affiliates provide services free of charge to people touched by cancer. Attend support groups, educational sessions, wellness programs, and more at a location near you. [www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/FindLocation](http://www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/FindLocation).

**MyLifeLine** — CSC's private, online community allows patients and caregivers to easily connect with friends and family to receive social, emotional, and practical support throughout the cancer journey and beyond. Connect with other caregivers by joining the Caregiver Support online discussion board. Sign up at [www.MyLifeLine.org](http://www.MyLifeLine.org).

**Grassroots Network** — Make sure your voice is heard by federal and state policy makers on issues affecting cancer patients and survivors by joining our Network at [www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/become-advocate](http://www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/become-advocate).

**Cancer Experience Registry**® — Help others by sharing your cancer patient or cancer caregiver experience via survey at [www.CancerExperienceRegistry.org](http://www.CancerExperienceRegistry.org).

The Cancer Support Community provides this information as a service. This publication is not intended to take the place of medical care or the advice of your doctor. We strongly suggest consulting your doctor or other health care professionals to answer questions and learn more.

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