

10 Tips to Eating Well With Multiple Myeloma



Nutrition is an essential part of your care during and after treatment for multiple myeloma (MM). Eating well can help maintain strength, support healing, and improve your overall quality of life. Some side effects can make eating challenging. These include fatigue (feeling very tired), weakness, appetite changes, and digestive issues.

This guide has been created for patients, caregivers, and additional loved ones. It offers 10 practical tips to help you stay nourished and feel your best while going through MM treatment. Always consult your healthcare team for personalized guidance.



Speak to your care team early and often about any concerns you may have about your nutrition. They can recommend support resources that you may find helpful. You may also refer to Cancer Support Community's webpage on Diet and Nutrition for more information and resources:
www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/Diet-Nutrition

Visit Cancer Support Community's webpage on multiple myeloma for information about risk factors, diagnosis, and treatment:
www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/Multiple-Myeloma



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ADVOCATE FOR YOUR NEEDS AND ASK FOR HELP

Open communication with your care team is key. If you're struggling with eating, speak up early. Ask when it's appropriate to see a registered dietitian (RD) or oncology dietitian. These specialized nutritionists can provide tailored advice for your unique needs. Don't hesitate to share concerns about appetite, taste changes, or digestive symptoms.

Fatigue is also common, and preparing meals can feel exhausting. Allow friends, family, or community members to help with cooking or grocery shopping. Accepting help frees up your energy for rest and recovery.



Cancer Support Community partners with Savor Health® to provide free access to Ina®, the world's first and only clinically validated digital dietitian. Ina® delivers nutrition guidance 24/7 "on demand" via a text message and at the time and place that patients and caregivers need expert support. Ina® provides highly personalized, evidence-based nutrition support to help people with diet-related chronic conditions (like cancer, heart disease, kidney disease, etc.) manage their health. Users can receive customized recipes, foods to eat and avoid, symptom management support, and answers to their nutrition questions that are based on clinical evidence, guidelines and the experience of medical professionals.

Register for free here: adcscgc.SavorHealth.com



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STAY HYDRATED

Hydration is extremely important. Your thirst senses may not work as well during treatment, so pay extra attention to how much liquid you're drinking. Water, juices, broths, and electrolyte drinks help maintain balance and prevent dehydration. This is important if you're experiencing fatigue, dry skin, diarrhea, constipation, or vomiting. Carry a water bottle and set phone reminders to sip throughout the day. If plain water doesn't sound appealing to you, try adding fruit slices or herbal tea for flavor.



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EAT SMALL, FREQUENT MEALS

Creating a meal plan can help you stay nourished and satisfied. Some treatments for MM, like dexamethasone (a steroid), can significantly increase your appetite. Balanced, more frequent meals that are high in fiber, protein, and healthy fats are going to make you feel more satisfied.

If you have no or little appetite, large meals can feel overwhelming. Instead, aim for smaller meals or snacks every few hours. Use an alarm or schedule to remember when to eat. Focus on high-protein, high-calorie options to meet your nutritional needs. Smoothies with protein powder, nut butter, and fruit are an easy way to pack in nutrients without feeling too full.



Healthy Recipe Gallery

Explore Cancer Support Community's collection of healthy recipes for breakfast, lunch, and dinner. These recipes support the nutritional needs of people impacted by cancer: www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/Recipe-Gallery



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TRACK AND PLAN

Create a food and symptom journal. Record what you eat, any symptoms you experience, their severity, and the time of day. This helps you and your care team identify patterns and make adjustments. For example, you might notice certain foods trigger discomfort or that mornings are easier for eating.

Once you have an idea of what works well, plan ahead. Stock the pantry or fridge with foods that require minimal prep or cooking. For example, you can steam vegetables or make oatmeal in the microwave. These are healthy items that take minimal effort and can help you on those days when you're not feeling well.

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LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

Your tastes and cravings may change. Keep an open mind and try food swaps when needed. Eggs can replace meat for protein. Or plant-based options like beans and tofu might feel better than animal products. Most importantly, eat what sounds good to you. Staying flexible is key to keeping your strength and energy up to tolerate treatment.



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MANAGE DIGESTIVE CHANGES

MM treatment can affect digestion. You may have changes in your appetite (increase or decrease), constipation, or diarrhea. For constipation, choose foods rich in insoluble fiber like beans, whole grains, and nuts. For diarrhea, go for soluble fiber, such as bananas and oatmeal. Hydration is also critical for managing constipation and diarrhea. Try drinking water, juices, or broths throughout the day.

Managing Treatment Side Effects

When discussing treatment options with your care team, it is helpful to know what the common short and long-term side effects are. Your care team can also help you manage them.

Find more information and tips for managing treatment side effects here:

www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/Managing-Side-Effects



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BOOST FLAVOR

Taste changes are common with MM treatment. Foods may taste metallic, bland, or overly salty or sweet. Enhance meals with spices, herbs, or syrups to make food more appealing. A sprinkle of cinnamon, a dash of lemon, or a drizzle of honey can make a dish easier to eat. You may also try eating with plastic or wooden utensils to reduce the metallic taste.



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CONSIDER SUPPLEMENTS WISELY

Supplements can help fill nutritional gaps. However, they should be used carefully, as many can get in the way of how cancer treatments work. A daily multivitamin and separate calcium and vitamin D supplements may be recommended. These can support your bone health, which is directly impacted by MM. **Always take supplements only as prescribed by your healthcare team** — some can interact with medications or treatments.



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REMEMBER HYGIENE AND FOOD SAFETY

Your immune system may be more vulnerable during treatment. Protect yourself by practicing good dental hygiene, cooking foods thoroughly, and washing your hands often. Keep up with your dental visits, and consider rinsing with a non-alcoholic mouthwash to maintain your oral health. These simple steps reduce the risk of infection and keep you safe.

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KEEP MOVING

Gentle physical activity supports digestion, energy, and mood. A short walk after a meal or light stretching in the morning can make a big difference. Check with your doctor before starting a new exercise routine or doing high-impact exercise. They can help you manage risks like bone fractures, weakness, and fatigue. Choose movements that feel good and fit your energy level. This may change throughout your treatment experience, and that is OK.

Caregiving for someone diagnosed with cancer brings its own challenges. While caregiving, it is important to focus on your own physical and mental health. Addressing your own needs will allow you to provide optimal long-term caregiving.

For more information and tips on caregiving, visit www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/Caregivers.

Eating well during MM treatment isn't about perfection — it's about finding what works for you. Small steps, like staying hydrated or adding nutritious smoothies or snacks, can make a big difference. Remember, you're not alone. Your care team is here to support you every step of the way.





RESOURCES

DIET & NUTRITION INFORMATION & SUPPORT

Cancer Support Community

888-793-9355

www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/Diet-Nutrition

www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/Multiple-Myeloma

Savor Health

SavorHealth.com

Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation

theMMRF.org

American Cancer Society

www.Cancer.org/Cancer/Survivorship/Coping/Nutrition.html

National Cancer Institute

www.Cancer.gov/About-Cancer/Treatment/Side-Effects/Nutrition

Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

www.EatRight.org/Health/Health-Conditions/Cancer

National Alliance for Caregiving

www.Caregiving.org



Cancer Support Community Resources

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-Thurs 11am-8pm ET and Fri 11am-6pm 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.

Services at Local CSCs and Gilda's Clubs — With the help of over 200 locations, in 50 markets, CSC and Gilda's Club centers provide services free of charge to people impacted by cancer. Attend support groups, educational sessions, wellness programs, and more
www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/FindLocation.

Cancer Experience Registry® — Help others by sharing your cancer patient or cancer caregiver experience via survey at **www.CancerExperienceRegistry.org**.

MyLifeLine® — CSC's secure, online community welcomes anyone impacted by cancer to easily connect with community to reduce stress, anxiety, and isolation. Create a personal network site and invite friends & family to follow your journey. And participate in our discussion forums any time of day to meet others like you who understand what you are experiencing. Join now at **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**.

This publication is available to download and print yourself at **www.CancerSupportCommunity.org/Diet-Nutrition**.

For print copies of this publication or other information about coping with cancer, visit **Orders.CancerSupportCommunity.org**.

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