Nutrition Tips for Patients Undergoing Breast Cancer Treatment

By Austin Park, Registered Dietitian Nutritionist, MS, RDN, CDN

While undergoing treatment for breast cancer, it is important to maintain a generally healthy diet, but here are some particular guidelines to follow. As a rule, make sure to eat enough calories and protein. If you lose your appetite, try smoothies, and keep easy foods around such as sardines, nuts/seeds, eggs and yogurt. Also, drink plenty of water throughout the day—aim for 6-8 cups.

Always remember:

- Eat a nutrient-dense, plant-based diet.
- Avoid foods with refined sugar as much as possible.
- Check blood test for vitamin D levels.
- Limit saturated fats and eliminate trans fats.

Specific Foods to seek out

- Cruciferous vegetables (such as broccoli, kale, and Brussels sprouts)
  - These vegetables are high in glucosinolates which are sulfur-containing compounds which convert to sulforaphane (SFN) a
chemopreventive, which induces apoptosis of cancer cells and slows their growth.

- Foods high in beta carotene (look for vegetables that are orange, red, or yellow, such as peppers, squash, and carrots)
- Pomegranates
- Foods high in omega 3 fatty acids: ALA (flaxseeds, chia seeds, walnuts, hempseeds) and EPA/DHA (salmon, sardines, black cod, mackerel)
- Flaxseeds (Grind them to increase their availability)
  - These seeds are an excellent source of omega-3 fatty acids and lignans which have beneficial phytoestrogen which helps with Tamoxifen (SERM).

**Can I eat soy?**

- It’s a good idea to limit processed soy products such as supplements or isoflavone extracts.
- Stick to whole soy foods such as miso, edamame and tofu

**Breast cancer treatment can trigger certain responses that make eating difficult.**

**Change in taste**

- Keep a list of favorite foods and dishes
- Use tart flavors (if tolerated) such as lemon, pickled foods, balsamic vinegar
- Season foods with herbs and spices such as oregano, onion, garlic or rosemary
- Rinse your mouth with water and baking soda

**Nausea and Vomiting**

- Eat small and light meals before treatment
- Bland foods: oatmeal, boiled potatoes, rice, toast, crackers
- Avoid high fat, fried, very sweet and heavily spiced foods

**Diarrhea**

- Increase fluid intake
- Replenish lost electrolytes with broth, bananas, sprinkle sea salt in water, dark greens and fruits

**Constipation**

- Increase fiber and fluids

**Gas and bloating**

- Avoid cauliflower, cabbage and beans

For more tips, check out our *Nutrition Tips for Breast Cancer Patients* booklet.
Why We Wear Red for Heart Month

Our Registered Dietitian Nutritionists are committed to supporting the heart health of our clients and the community. Here are their favorite tips on how to protect your heart.

Stuffed Red Peppers
This vegetarian dish pops with flavor and nutrients. Curry, a blend of various spices including coriander, cumin, turmeric, ginger and cloves, lends depth, richness, and yes, a little kick. The cheese, lentils, vegetables a...

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**American Heart Month: Managing Hypertension**

Approximately 1 of 3 adults in the U.S. have hypertension, or high blood pressure. Hypertension often has no symptoms, and left untreated, can lead to problems such as heart disease and heart failure. If you have not gotten y...