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Nutrition Tips for Patients Undergoing Breast Cancer Treatment

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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.](#)

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