

Chemotherapy and Nutrition

Stark County Health Department
Community Nutrition Clinic
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WHAT'S THE LINK BETWEEN CHEMOTHERAPY AND NUTRITION?

Some chemotherapy drugs can cause some side effects that can make it difficult for you to eat right and get the nutrition you need. These drugs can affect your gastrointestinal (gas-trow-intes-tinn-ul) tract, making it hard for you to eat enough.

Your gastrointestinal tract is sometimes called your "GI tract." Your GI tract is all the parts of your body that you use to take food in and send waste out.

Eating enough food can help keep your weight up, and can make you feel stronger. If you feel strong, your body and immune system will be able to handle the treatments better.

WHAT KINDS OF SIDE EFFECTS ARE THERE?

Please remember that not everyone will have these side effects.

People respond differently to chemotherapy, and some people will have very few problems.

Some common side effects are:

- Changes in the way food tastes
- Feeling sick (nausea and vomiting)
- Constipation and diarrhea

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- Pain or discomfort in your GI tract
- Feeling full all the time
- Problems in your mouth or with your teeth

Your dietitian can help you solve these problems!

Please ask your dietitian for handouts on these problems.

WHY IS EATING RIGHT SO IMPORTANT?

You need to make sure that you keep eating enough food during your chemotherapy. Eating right will help you stay strong and will help your body handle the chemotherapy better.

Even though you may have some of the problems listed above, it's important that you work with your dietitian to make sure you are eating as well as you can.

There are lots of things you can try to help yourself. For example, there are meal plans you can eat that will help you with diarrhea or constipation.

There are also tips you can use that will help food taste better and cut down on food smells that might bother you.

WHY ARE FLUIDS SO IMPORTANT?

Drinking fluids will help you avoid dehydration (dee-hi-dray-shun). Dehydration can happen when your body doesn't have as much liquid as it needs to work right.

Drinking fluids also helps to flush the chemotherapy drugs out of your system. Your dietitian will be able to tell you how much you need to drink each day.

WORKING WITH YOUR DIETITIAN

Your dietitian will work with you to come up with a plan for eating right. You can develop meal plans that will help make sure you get the calories and

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protein you need to stay strong. If you have any questions, please ask your dietitian or doctor!

My Dietitian is: _____

Phone Number: _____

My next appointment is on: _____ at _____ AM/PM

NOTES: