

### Resources

#### Susan G. Komen®

1-877 GO KOMEN  
(1-877-465-6636)  
[komen.org](http://komen.org)

#### National Cancer Institute Eating Hints:

Before, During and After  
Cancer Treatments  
[cancer.gov/cancerinfo/eatinghints](http://cancer.gov/cancerinfo/eatinghints)

### Related online resources:

- [Complementary and Integrative Therapies](#)
- [Treatment Overview for Breast Cancer](#)



### Eating well during breast cancer treatment

As you go through breast cancer treatment, it's best to eat a healthy diet. Be sure to eat a variety of foods, including whole grains, fruits, vegetables and lean protein such as chicken, fish or beans. It's important to eat a high-protein diet during breast cancer treatment. High-protein foods support your immune system and eating enough calories will give your body the energy and nutrients it needs to help get you through treatment.

Some people may have a hard time eating during treatment. This is normal. Ask your doctor to refer you to a registered dietitian. They can help you if you're having trouble eating.

### A word about... weight gain

Weight gain is a common side effect of chemotherapy, especially in women who go into early menopause.

Also, changes in metabolism from chemotherapy and a less active lifestyle can cause you to gain weight. Fluid retention (your body holding water) and an increased appetite from other medications may sometimes cause weight gain, as well.

Women who gain weight during chemotherapy usually put on about 5-15 pounds. The more weight a woman gains, the less likely she is to return to her pre-diagnosis weight.

A healthy diet and exercise may help prevent weight gain.

Let your doctor know if you notice any big weight changes. They will look into what is causing this change and give you advice or refer you to a dietitian.

### A word about... nutrition supplements

Talk with your doctor before taking any nutrition supplement. Some may interfere with your breast cancer treatments.

### A word about... drug-nutrient interactions

Some foods, drinks and supplements such as grapefruit, green tea and St. John's Wart may reduce the effectiveness of some treatment medications. Ask your doctor or dietitian if there are any drug-nutrient interactions with the medications you're taking.

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This fact sheet is intended to be a brief overview. For more information, visit [komen.org](http://komen.org) or call Susan G. Komen's Breast Care Helpline at 1-877 GO KOMEN (1-877-465-6636) Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. ET, or email at [helpline@komen.org](mailto:helpline@komen.org). Se habla español.

### Common concerns

Some breast cancer treatments may cause side effects that can affect your diet. If you have any of the side effects listed below, be sure to tell your doctor and dietitian. The tips listed under each side effect may also help.

#### I have nausea and vomiting.

- Talk with your doctor about medications that can help.
- Eat 4-6 small meals each day and snacks when needed. Nausea may become worse with an empty stomach.
- Try to pair a fat, carb and protein source together to help you stay fuller longer to prevent or reduce nausea.
- Try ginger tea, ginger ale or crystallized ginger, or add fresh [ginger](#) when you're cooking.
- Drink lemonade or lemon water.
- Eat bland, easy-to-digest foods that don't have an odor, such as toast, rice or baked potatoes.
- Eat cool or frozen foods. These may have fewer odors than warmer foods.
- Avoid foods that are spicy, fried, very greasy or very sweet.
- Cook and freeze meals to reheat during times when you feel nauseous. Reheating causes fewer odors than cooking.
- Open the windows to keep fresh air flowing. Use an overhead fan to decrease cooking odors.
- Take walks or step outside to get fresh air.
- Talk with your doctor about [complementary and integrative therapies](#) (such as [acupressure](#), [acupuncture](#), [relaxation techniques](#), [hypnosis](#), [guided imagery](#) and [music therapy](#)) that may help.

#### Foods just don't taste or smell the same.

- Try tart foods, like lemon pudding, or try stronger seasonings, like oregano and rosemary.
- Avoid strong smelling meat, such as beef. Try chicken, turkey or eggs.

#### My mouth and throat are very sore.

- Talk to your doctor about medications that can help.
- Eat softer foods such as mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese, milkshakes, smoothies, pudding or applesauce.
- Eat foods at room temperature. Foods that are too hot can make your sore mouth feel worse.

#### My mouth is really dry.

- Suck on hard candy or eat popsicles or fruit juice bars. They help produce more saliva.
- Add gravy, broth and sauces to your food.
- Try drinking smoothies to get in nutrients and liquids. Play around with the texture of the smoothies by adjusting how much ice or liquid you add.

#### Diarrhea is a problem for me.

- Talk with your doctor about medications that can help.
- Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day. Water, broth and juice are good choices.
- Eat foods low in fiber such as pasta, white bread and smooth nut butter. Your doctor may recommend the BRAT diet (bananas, rice, applesauce and toast).
- Avoid greasy foods, milk and other dairy products.

#### I'm constipated.

- Increase your fluid intake. Aim for drinking half of your body weight (in pounds) in ounces each day.
- Eat high-fiber foods such as whole grain bread, fresh fruits and vegetables, nuts and seeds, brown rice, and beans.
- Take a stool softener with an entire glass of water.

