

# NUTRITION GUIDE FOR ONCOLOGY PATIENTS

A Guide for  
Patients/Families



**Department of Nutrition and Food Services**



آغا خان یونیورسٹی ہسپتال، کراچی

**The Aga Khan University Hospital, Karachi**



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# Nutrition Guide for Oncology Patients

A healthy diet is especially important for people with cancer. Diet is an important part of your treatment for cancer. A nutritious diet is always vital for your body to work at its best.

## Eating a balanced diet can help:

Improve your nutritional status.

Reduce treatment side effects.

Decrease the risk of infection.

You heal and recover faster.

Make you feel better.

## Dietary guidelines during cancer therapy.

### Always wash hands before cooking and taking meal.

Foods	Foods to choose	Foods to avoid
Starches (breads, crackers cereal, and potatoes).	Pasta, rice, Bread, Homemade chapattis, paratha, puri, nan. All plain breakfast cereals e.g. cornflakes, Bran flakes, porridge.	Cereals containing nuts and dried fruits for e.g muesli, Crunchy Nut.
Fruits and vegetable.	Fresh fruit, and vegetables should be washed, peeled, cored and remove damaged areas.	Unwashed fruit, and vegetables, those with Damaged skin or moldy growth, Salad from salad bars in restaurants, dried uncooked fruit and nuts.
Meat, chicken and fish.	Well-cooked meat.	Raw/undercooked meat, poultry, fish e.g. chicken which is still pink after cooking.

Foods	Foods to choose	Foods to avoid
Egg.	Well-cooked boiled egg scrambled, Fried, omelet.	Raw or cracked eggs half fried/half boiled egg. Dishes containing raw or undercooked eggs, for example homemade mousse mayonnaise.
Milk & Dairy products (yogurt, cheese).	Boiled, pasteurized packed milk, canned or dry milk, yoghurt made with boiled milk or packed yoghurt.	All unpasteurized milk and other dairy products Yogurt made up of raw milk. Cream in cakes.
Beverages.	Packed /pasteurized juices.	Beverages made with tap water and those bought from hawkers
Miscellaneous.	Individually wrapped branded ice creams, All sweets, biscuits and chocolates should be pre-wrapped.	Un branded ice cream sold by hawkers. Avoid sweets and chocolates containing dried fruit and nuts  Chocolates filled with dried fruit, nuts, coconut and cream.

## Nutritional management of side effects during cancer treatment.

Cancer and cancer treatments can also affect your body's ability to tolerate certain foods and may induce some side effects. This guide can help you to cope with treatment side effects.

### Nausea.

- Eat small, frequent meals every 2-3 hours. Having an empty stomach makes nausea worse.
- Eat dry food such as crackers, bread sticks or toast frequently.
- Take homemade or prepacked fluids frequently like yakhni, sherbet, lemonade, thin lassi, juice, jelly.in case of diabetes take sugar free drinks.
- Sit up for one hour after eating.
- Eat soft, bland and easily digested food rather than fried, greasy and rich food.

## **Anorexia (Loss of Appetite).**

- Eat small portions of high calorie and protein foods like homemade or packaged milk shakes, ice-cream, yogurt, pudding, custard, kheer. Take sugar free in case of diabetes.
- Eat 6-8 small meals each day instead of 03 large meals.
- Add extra calories and protein by adding dry milk, oil\butter, and glucose powder in meals. in case of diabetes consult your doctor.
- Keep snacks available at all times, such as homemade/ packaged cookies, biscuit, sandwich, and well-cooked kebabs/ cutlets. Take sugar free in case of diabetes.

## **Diarrhea\Loose stools.**

- Take soft foods like noodles, khichri, rice, bread, banana, potato without skin, sago dana, well cooked chicken/egg soups.
- Drink plenty of homemade fluids like lassi, yakhni, coconut water, *ORS* (on doctor 's advice).
- Reduce dietary fiber like fruits (except banana), vegetable (except potato), wholegrain cereals, beans, chickpeas.
- Avoid milk and its products, can take yogurt and its products.
- Avoid fried, greasy and spicy foods.

## **Constipation.**

- Eat more fiber-containing food on a regular basis like fruits vegetables, lentil, beans, whole wheat flour and its products.
- Drink 10-12 cups of fluids a day.
- Can take packaged isphagol husk as per doctor/dietitian advice.

## **Dry mouth**

- Keep water handy to moisten the mouth at all times.
- Eat homemade/ packaged foods like custard, jelly, cold milk shakes, frozen yogurt, ice-lollies. Take sugar free in case of diabetes.
- Moist food with extra sauces and gravies.
- Frequently Consume beverages like soup, lemonade, lassi, juices.
- Suck ice cubes, hard candy and peppermint. Take sugar free in case of diabetes.

## **Chewing and swallowing difficulties:**

- Eat soft items and grind foods like homemade/ packaged khichri, porridge, sago dana, suji, soup, milk, yogurt and its products.
- Add extra calories and protein by adding dry milk, oil/butter, and glucose powder in meals e.g. add dry milk in homemade milk shakes, vermicelli, and porridge. Add butter in soups, khichri, bread. Take sugar free in case of diabetes.
- Blend foods with meat/chicken broth or milk instead of plain water.

## **Mouth sore.**

- Eat soft bland and cold foods like homemade/ packaged ice-cream, custard. Pudding, vermicelli, kheer, milkshakes, fruit purees, flavored milk/yogurt. Take sugar free in case of diabetes.
- Avoid sharp, crunchy, citrus and spicy foods.
- Drink through straw.

## **Life after cancer treatment**

- Adopt moderation and variety as the keys to a healthy diet and lifestyle.
- Enjoy food and be active.
- Consult your physician and dietitian as they are your best sources of information about your diet.



**Important note**

Food provided during hospitalization to patients is disease specific and during stay food from outside hospital is not permitted. Written and verbal instruction related to dietary restrictions is explained by clinical nutrition staff, where applicable.

**Outpatient Nutrition Care Clinics**

For further information:

**Nazarali Walji Building (NW 2)**

Phone: (021) 3486-5789, 3486-5790  
Monday to Friday  
Timing: Morning 9:00am - 12:00am

**IZB Oncology Clinic (2nd Floor)**

Phone: (021) 3486-1814  
Tuesday and Thursday  
Timing: 9:00am - 12:00noon

**Consulting Clinic (CC4)**

Phone: (021) 3486-1034  
Friday  
Timing: Evening 2:00pm - 4:00pm

**Gastroenterology Clinic  
(JHS Building)**

Phone: (021) 3486-1055/ 3486-6308  
Thursday  
Timings: Morning 9.00am - 12.00pm

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