

## Tips

### Dietary Consultation

Losing weight, not eating enough, and not eating the right things can make it hard to recover. If you're struggling to eat, don't keep it to yourself. Talk to your healthcare team or your doctor. They can refer you for regular nutritional support to help reduce these risks.

### Further information on this topic

- **«Eat Well During Cancer»** (World Cancer Research Fund UK, 2020) – Evidence-based nutrition and healthy recipes
- **«Nutrition for People Living with Cancer»** (Cancer Council Australia, 2025) – Practical guide on nutrition for people with cancer, their families, and friends

### Society of Nutrition (SGE-SSN)

- **«Swiss dietary recommendations »**

### Other Symptom Navi flyers:

- **«Stay active»**
- **«Taste changes»**
- **«Loss of appetite»**
- **«Oral mucositis»**
- **«Nausea and vomiting»**

## Nutrition and cancer

### Good to know




Many people diagnosed with cancer wonder if they should change their diet. You cannot cure cancer by eating certain foods. However, several studies seem to show that a healthy and balanced diet (see the complementary brochure "Daily nutrition") combined with regular exercise can improve quality of life and prognosis of cancer. But there is no proof that diets based on a single "anti-cancer" food are effective. It is not advised to follow a restrictive diet.

You may have difficulty eating because of symptoms related to cancer and/or treatments (changes to your taste, mouth ulcers, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, etc.). There is a risk of undernutrition (your body does not get enough of the nutrients it needs from what you eat) or malnutrition (you do not eat a wide variety of foods, so your body does not get all the nutrients it needs to function properly). This risk is present even in cases of being overweight and should be monitored by your healthcare team.

We recommend that you get this checked out as soon as possible after your diagnosis, before you have surgery or treatment. You should get your nutrition checked regularly, especially if you have lost your appetite or weight.



## Nutrition and cancer

You feel...	Or you notice...	What you can do...
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You don't feel like eating as much, but you should still eat the same amount as usual</li> <li>You haven't lost any weight</li> <li>The clothes you wore three months ago still fit you (they are not too big)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Try to eat a wide variety of different fruits and vegetables every day (at least 5 portions).</li> <li>Eat whole grains, and legumes, and limit how much processed food, sweets, fried food, salty snacks, and red meat you eat.</li> <li>You can follow the advice in the "Daily nutrition" brochure to find out exactly what and how much to eat.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You eat less because you don't feel like eating, or because of other symptoms</li> <li>You haven't lost much weight (less than 5% of your usual weight in 3 months)</li> <li>Your usual clothes are now a little too big for you. This has happened over the past three months.</li> <li>You realise that your muscles are getting weaker</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Get in touch with the healthcare team or the dietitian to check the risk of undernutrition or malnutrition. They may look at what you are eating or suggest nutritional supplements.</li> <li>You can follow the recommendations in the "Daily nutrition" brochure. But you can also eat more of what you fancy, and focus on foods that are high in calories and protein to avoid weight loss (see Tips, Swiss Cancer League).</li> <li>If you don't eat much, you can eat more often (5 or 6 times a day).</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You eat very little</li> <li>and/or you have lost more than 5% of your usual weight in 2 months</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact your healthcare team or a dietitian.</li> <li>At this stage priorities are different: you need to regain weight and you need more than advice about a 'healthy diet'. There is a risk of malnutrition or undernutrition that can affect your healing and your body needs additional energy.</li> </ul>