



Cancer and its treatment place extra demands on you. Extra energy (calories), protein and nutrients are often needed. Eating well during and after cancer treatment will help you:

- have more energy
- maintain your bodyweight and muscle
- cope better with side effects
- recover more quickly
- fight infection and heal well
- improve your sense of wellbeing and quality of life.

Some side effects can reduce your appetite. Your ability to eat the amount and type of food you need can be affected. You may have problems with eating due to side effects of cancer and its treatment such as:

- fatigue
- loss of appetite (not feeling hungry)
- nausea (feeling sick) and vomiting
- taste and smell changes
- dry and sore mouth

- dental problems
- mouth or swallowing problems
- bowel problems (abdominal pain, wind, constipation and diarrhoea)
- other problems such as changes in your weight

The information in this sheet provides you with some recipes for when eating is difficult and when you want healthy recipes.

Recipes to help when eating is difficult

These are simple, easy to prepare meals and drinks that can be pureed if needed. They can be helpful if you are having trouble eating and swallowing.

Congee

- 1 cup long-grain uncooked white rice
- 7 cups vegetable or chicken stock
- 2cm knob ginger, peeled and thinly sliced
- salt, soy sauce, sesame oil, chopped green onions (optional)

Cook rice, stock and ginger in a large pot, simmering on low for one hour. Stir to stop sticking. Add other ingredients, topping with onions if you want them. You can add chicken, tofu or other cooked protein to this recipe.



Mouthwash recipe

Add 1tsp salt and 1tsp bicarbonate of soda (baking soda) to 1Litre of water.

Mix thoroughly. Use as a mouth rinse and spit out after rinsing your mouth.

Store in the fridge.

Discard after 24 hours.

Use often during the day, after food, and before going to sleep at night. This is a good cleanser. It helps healing, helps to break down thick saliva and reduce tooth decay.

Enriched milk (increases nutrients)

1 L full-cream milk

4 or more tbsp milk powder

Thoroughly mix ingredients in a jug until powder is dissolved. Use this enriched milk in tea and coffee, cereal, soups, sauces, milkshakes and smoothies

Apricot lemon crush

- 425 g can apricot halves in natural fruit juice
- 1 cup natural yoghurt
- juice of 1 lemon
- 1 tbsp honey
- 2 tbsp wheatgerm
- crushed ice

Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth

(Recipes from Cancer Council Australia)



Banana smoothie

- 1 cup milk or milk alternative
- 1 heaped tbsp milk powder or recommended quantity of Sustagen Hospital Formula, Ensure Powder, Fortisip Powder, Enprocal or Proform (refer to instructions on packaging or follow the advice of your dietitian)
- 1 ripe banana
- 1 scoop ice-cream
- 1 tsp honey (optional)

Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. Use whatever fruit you have – fresh, frozen or tinned.

Foundation broth

- 250 g meat (any cut)
- 600 mL water
- 30g cereal (e.g. sago, rice or pearl barley), washed
- 1 stalk celery, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 carrot, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 onion, peeled and finely chopped
- salt and pepper

Remove the fat from the meat and cut into small pieces. Soak meat and bones in cold water for 30 minutes, then bring slowly to the boil. Add cereal once soup is boiling. Simmer for 1 hour. Add vegetables to soup and simmer for 30 minutes. Remove bones, and season to taste with salt and pepper.

Further information

- [Cancer Council Victoria: The Nutrition and Cancer booklet](#)
- [Understanding Malnutrition and Cancer: Information for people affected by cancer](#)
- [Taste and Smell Changes fact sheet](#)
- [American Institute of Cancer Research](#)
- [American Cancer Society](#)
- Buckman Weinstein, Jodi. (2010) Tell Me What to Eat Before, During and After Cancer Treatment. USA: New Page Books
- [Cancer Council Australia](#)
- Katzin, Carolyn. (2011) The Cancer Nutrition Centre Handbook—An Essential Guide for Cancer Patients and Their Families. Los Angeles: CFK.
- Van Mil, José; MacKenzie-Archer C. (2009) Healthy Eating During Chemotherapy. USA: Kyle Books.
- [Canterbury Health. Smooth Pureed Diet](#)

Recipes for anytime



Thai chicken salad

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 125g rice noodles
- 1 tbsp oil
- 2 tbsp crushed ginger
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 500g chicken breast, skinned and sliced into strips
- pinch chilli flakes (optional)
- 1/2 iceberg lettuce, finely shredded
- 4 tomatoes, diced
- 1/2 cup chopped coriander
- 4 spring onions, sliced
- 2 cups mung bean sprouts
- 2 tbsp white vinegar/1 tsp sugar/2 tbsp lemon juice/1 tbsp fish sauce

Method

1. Cook rice noodles in a pot of boiling water for 5-8 minutes or until tender, then drain and run under cold water and drain.
2. Heat a pan over a medium heat. Add oil, ginger and garlic and cook briefly.
3. Add chicken and chilli flakes (if using) and cook until cooked through.
4. Combine noodles, lettuce, tomatoes, coriander, spring onions, mung bean sprouts, vinegar, sugar, lemon juice and fish sauce.
5. Divide noodle salad into four bowls and top with the chicken.

Recipes from the Heart Foundation website www.heartfoundation.org.nz.



Sapasui

Serves 4

Ingredients

- 125g vermicelli noodles
- 1 tbsp oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 tsp fresh ginger, grated
- 500g lean beef, stir-fry cut
- 1 red pepper or carrot, finely chopped
- 1 head broccoli, cut into bite-size pieces
- 1 cup green beans, sliced
- 2 tbsp soy sauce & 2 tbsp lemon juice
- 1/2 cup coriander, chopped roughly

Method

1. Place the vermicelli in a large bowl and add hot water until just covered. Soak for 10-15 minutes or until the noodles have expanded.
2. Heat the oil in a large pot, add the onion and cook until softened.
3. Add garlic and ginger and cook briefly.
4. Add the beef and cook until it is just done.
5. Drain the vermicelli over a bowl, saving a 1/2 cup of the soaking liquid.
6. Add the vermicelli and 1/2 cup of soaking liquid to the beef mix.
7. Add the vegetables and soy sauce, and simmer for a couple of minutes.

Tip: Be careful not to stir this dish too much, or the vermicelli will become mushy.



Red lentil and vegetable curry

Serves 6

- 1 tablespoon oil
 - 2 onions, diced
 - 1-2 cloves garlic, crushed
 - 1 tablespoon chopped fresh ginger
 - 1 tablespoon curry paste
 - 1 litre water
 - 1 vegetable stock cube
 - 3 carrots, peeled and finely diced
 - 1½ cups dried red or brown lentils
 - 1 cup frozen peas
 - 1 packed cup washed and chopped spinach
1. Heat the oil in a large saucepan pan over low heat, add onions and cook until soft.
 2. Add garlic, ginger and curry paste, stir and continue cooking for 1-2 minutes.
 3. Add water, stock, carrots and lentils and bring to the boil, then reduce heat and simmer until carrots and lentils are tender, about 15-20 minutes. Add more water if necessary. Most of the water should be evaporated by this stage. The mixture will reduce and become thicker.
 4. Stir in peas and cook for 2 minutes, then stir through spinach, mix well.
 5. Remove from heat, spoon into serving dishes and serve.



Bulgar wheat and kūmara loaf

Serves 4

- 1 cup bulgur wheat
 - 1 cup boiling water
 - 1 1/2 cups grated kūmara (1 kūmara)
 - 1 1/2 cups grated carrot (2 carrots)
 - 2/3 cup grated cheese
 - 4 eggs
 - 250g cottage cheese
1. Place the bulgur wheat in a bowl and pour over the boiling water. Cover and let it sit for 30 minutes.
 2. Heat oven to 180°C.
 3. Spray or wipe 1 large or 4 mini loaf tins with a little oil.
 4. When the bulgur wheat has absorbed the water add the remaining ingredients and mix well.
 5. Spoon into the loaf tins.
 6. Bake for approximately 30 minutes.
 7. Remove from oven and serve with a salad and relish.

Recipes from the Heart Foundation website www.heartfoundation.org.nz.



Perfect Protein salad

- 1 1/2 cups dry soybeans, soaked
 - 1 1/2 cups dry red wheat berries (or buckwheat available at your supermarket or health food shop), soaked
 - 6 scallions, finely chopped
 - 2 medium carrots, finely chopped
 - 2 small cucumbers, seeded & finely chopped
 - 1/2 red bell pepper, finely chopped
 - 1 cup cottage cheese
 - 1 cup minced flat-leaf parsley
 - 1/2 cup minced fresh dill
1. Dressing:
 - 1/2 cup cider vinegar
 - 2 teaspoons kosher salt
 - Freshly ground black pepper, to taste
 - 1/2 cup light mayonnaise
 - 3-4 cloves of garlic, minced
 2. Cook soybeans and wheat, chop and mix everything. Soy beans can be replaced with other beans.

Recipe from the Moosewood CAFE recipe book.



More recipes

- [Te Korowai Hauora o Hauraki – Kia Kaha Te Kai](#)
- Gourley, Glenda. (2010) The New Zealand Vegetable Book. New Zealand: Hyndman Publishing.
- [Healthy Food Guide](#)

Heart Foundation:

- [Pasifika flavours](#)
- [Kai Lelei](#)
- [Full O Beans](#)
- [Affordable eats \(2019\)](#)
- [My Family Recipes](#)
- [The New Zealand Vegetarian Society](#)
- [Vegetables.co.nz](#)