

Healthy Living: Diet and Exercise After Treatment



Adjusting to your life after cancer treatment can be a challenge. Research shows that maintaining a normal weight can help decrease your risk of recurrence and may help prevent new cancers from developing. Diet and exercise will not only help you achieve your weight loss goals, but can also improve your mental health, reduce fatigue, and give you more energy.

Eating tips after treatment include:

- Follow a schedule – don't skip a meal
- Adjust portions by using a smaller plate – this will make the meal seem bigger
- Eat lean and plant-based proteins – fruits, vegetables, whole grains, legumes, nuts
- Limit eating red meat, processed foods, and refined grains
- Drink low-fat dairy
- Limit high-calorie foods and drinks
- Limit alcohol to 3 drinks per week
- Meet with a dietitian, this can be helpful in making better food choices
- Aim to meet nutritional needs through diet alone rather than supplements

Exercise is very important to incorporate into your daily routine. You should exercise at an intensity that gets your heart rate up at least 30 minutes a day 5 days a week. Take your time and gradually increase your exercise. Don't get discouraged if the results you're looking for don't show up immediately. Aim for a normal body mass index (BMI) of 18-24.

Exercising tips:

- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Limit sitting activities- take breaks during the day to stand, stretch, or take short walks
- Do simple everyday tasks such as gardening, walking the dog, or dancing
- Go jogging, swimming, or bicycling
- Lift weights or do resistance training
- Try incorporating different exercise programs to keep it fresh, interesting and fun
- Consider joining a program like YMCA's LIVESTRONG program
- Consider consulting with a certified fitness professional

If you are thinking of doing extreme exercises, consult your doctor first.