

Nutrition During Oesophageal Cancer

Good nutrition during treatment is important. It will help you maintain your weight. This is good for your long term health.

It can be difficult to eat or drink due to possible side effects of the cancer or treatment. Side effects can include:

- Poor appetite (not feeling hungry)
- Dry mouth
- Pain in mouth and throat
- Feeling sick and vomiting
- Increased nutritional needs (protein + energy: calories or kilojoules)
- Changes to your sense of taste
- Fatigue (feeling tired)



Keeping weight stable during treatment helps to:

- Prevent unplanned hospital stays
- Increase treatment tolerance and improve treatment response
- Support your immune system to decrease risk of infections and disease recurrence



Tips for when your appetite is poor:

- Instead of relying on appetite, eat every 2-3 hours or 6-8 small meals each day instead of 3 large ones
- Eat protein at each meal (i.e. meat, fish, chicken, eggs, dairy products, legumes, tofu, soy, protein powders eg. Sustagen™/Ensure™/Advital™)
- Don't avoid any foods unless they are causing problems/pain/discomfort
- Choose drinks that give you more energy or protein (i.e. milk, soy milk and juice) over less nourishing drinks (water, tea, black coffee, diet drinks and cordial)
- If taste changes, add extra flavour to food through marinades, herbs, spices and sauces

Add extra protein and energy to your meals (see next page for suggestions)

Nutritional supplement drinks may help you get the nutrients you need - discuss with your Dietitian for suitable options

Tips if having swallowing difficulties/ oesophageal pain:

- Chew foods well and eat slowly, sit upright when eating
- Avoid lying down straight after meals, this can help stop reflux
- Add extra gravy or sauces to meals, or have moist meals such as soups, casseroles, stews or congee
- Dip bread and biscuits in drinks or soup
- Mashed potato, cooked rice, peanut butter and white bread may stick in your throat – try noodles, pasta or congee instead
- Try blending or mashing meat and vegetables with extra sauce
- Avoid foods and drinks which may further irritate your throat pain such as vinegar, spices and spicy foods, salty foods, alcohol/ alcohol based mouthwashes, very hot temperature foods or drinks, citrus fruits and juices and tomato based foods
- Choose high calorie drinks if you can't swallow any food (i.e. milk, soy milk, UpNGo™, smoothies, soups, Milo™, milkshakes)
- It is important to take your pain relief medications as prescribed by your doctor. Keeping a pain diary will also help your treating team to better manage your pain

If you can't swallow solid food or are losing weight talk to your dietitian or CNC (clinical nurse consultant).



Tips if feeling tired:

Going through cancer treatment can cause physical and emotional stress. You need to look after yourself and rest when needed. Here are some tips to help you manage fatigue while trying to eat well:

- Prepare food in bulk when able to, and freeze/ store for when you don't feel like cooking
- Use convenience foods like meal kits, pre-cut vegetables and jars of sauce and seasoning packets
- Use ready-to-eat or pre-prepared foods such as frozen meals/ dumplings, snacks and beverages
- Ask for help from family or friends
- Talk to your health practitioner about support options and services available



Adding more energy and protein to your food:

To add protein: 🍴



For foods like:	Try adding:	
Soups, Stews, Curries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meat • Eggs • Lentils & legumes • Tofu 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soy & dairy products • Dumplings & wontons • Meatballs & fish cakes
Salads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheese • Nuts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meat & eggs • Tofu & other soy products
Congee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meat/fish floss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eggs
Drinks, Soups & Other Fluids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustagen™/Ensure™/Advital™ Neutral powders 	
Sweet Soups, Milk & Drinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adzuki beans • Peanuts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tofu • Puddings
Fruit	Serve with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Custard • Condensed Milk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cream • Yoghurt

Tip: Choose creamy soups and desserts over watery desserts or broth. Make porridge, soups, desserts and drinks on milk or soy milk instead of water

Tip: Try French Toast!
Bread dipped in eggs then fried

To add energy: 



For foods like:	Try adding:
Curries, Pastas, Rice Dishes, Potatoes & Other Mashed Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oil & flavoured oils like sesame • Milk • Cream • Butter & margarine • Coconut milk & cream
Meats, Poultry & Fish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fry with oil • Crumbing or battering before frying will add even more energy
Rice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cook with butter or oil, or have fried rice/fried noodles instead
Soups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noodles • Rice • Fried bread • Rice cakes
Salads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayonnaise • Sesame dressing • Full fat salad dressings
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sour cream • Oil • Mayonnaise • Butter & margarine • Honey & sugar
Desserts & Sweet Soups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cream or coconut cream • Ice-Cream • Condensed milk • Sugar syrups • Sago & tapioca • Glutinous rice balls
Breads, Biscuits & Crackers	<p>Spread with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avocado • Cream cheese • Butter or margarine • Dips

Tip: Use full fat dairy products rather than skim, low fat or diet products

Tip: Add sauces, pastes, honey or sugar when cooking and serving (e.g. spicy bean sauce, chu hou paste, satay sauce, miso paste)

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