



Nourish

CANADA'S NUTRITION COMPANION
FOR ONCOLOGY PATIENTS
AND CAREGIVERS

Eating and Living Well with Stomach Cancer

nourishonline.ca

My Gut Feeling is Canada's first and only non-profit organization dedicated to providing peer-to-peer support, education, awareness, and advocacy to stomach cancer patients, survivors, and caregivers.

Through education and awareness, we provide information on the day-to-day journey of being diagnosed, living with and surviving stomach cancer. Through advocacy we aim to bring the patient voice to the forefront and most importantly improve quality of life.

Food is integral to quality of life, from eating dinner with the family and going to restaurants with friends to celebrating life's milestones with loved ones. Food brings us together, nourishes us, and keeps us healthy and happy.

Stomach cancer completely changes all of that. The symptoms and side effects of surgery, treatment and beyond are life altering. Weight loss, vitamin deficiency, and fatigue are common and sometimes debilitating issues that people with stomach cancer experience.

We have partnered with two registered dietitians and *Nourish* to focus on these important issues for stomach cancer patients. We hope this guide helps you to eat and live well!



Eating and living well with stomach cancer is a special edition of *Nourish: Canada's* nutrition companion for oncology patients and caregivers.

For more information and to obtain a digital version of this book, go to:
mygutfeeling.ca nourishonline.ca

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Questions, comments, suggestions? We love to hear from you **info@nourishonline.ca**

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Nutrition through diagnosis, treatment, and beyond

This guide, written by registered dietitians, helps you manage your nutrition during and after stomach cancer treatment.

Stomach cancer can cause symptoms that make eating difficult. These symptoms may result from the cancer, its treatment, or both.

The cancer continuum covers all stages—from prevention and detection to diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship. Your nutritional needs, goals, and abilities may change throughout these stages. This guide is designed to support you along the way and help you in making choices to feel your best.



Managing nutrition-related side effects

Chemotherapy, radiation, and surgery can make it hard to eat and affect your ability to get enough nutrients. If you struggle with eating or side effects, talk to your healthcare team. We encourage you to care for yourself by eating well. When much feels out of control, what and how much you eat can play a key role in your treatment and recovery.

MAINTAINING YOUR WEIGHT AND MUSCLE MASS

Weight loss often happens when you eat less than what your body needs. Losing a lot of weight over a short period of time can weaken your immune system, slow healing, and limit your ability to enjoy daily activities.

Research shows that maintaining your weight and muscle mass during cancer treatment can help you respond better to therapy, recover faster, and improve your quality of life.

WELL NOURISHED step-by-step

Step 1

Manage side effects caused by the cancer and its treatment.

When nausea, constipation, taste changes, diarrhea, sore mouth or throat pain are under control, it will be easier to eat. Discuss these symptoms with your healthcare team.

Step 2

Make every bite and sip count. Choose foods and fluids that contain calories and protein throughout the day as much as possible. This will ensure you are getting the most energy and nutrients from what you eat and drink.

Managing nausea

Nausea is very common and may worsen with chemotherapy or surgery. If left uncontrolled, it can lead to poor nutrition and unwanted weight loss. There are many medications to help with nausea. Take nausea medications as prescribed. The following suggestions may also help:

- Avoid food odours, which may trigger nausea, by asking for help preparing meals. Choose foods you can eat cold or at room temperature.
- Plan to eat every 2–3 hours throughout the day.
- Drink plenty of fluids to prevent dehydration. Sipping on fluids between meals is often better tolerated.
- Try to avoid lying down for 30–60 minutes after eating. Lying down right after eating can worsen nausea and reflux symptoms.
- Starchy and bland foods are easy to digest and may be easier to eat. Try soda crackers, plain rice, dry cereals, toast, bread sticks, plain noodles, canned fruit or tea biscuits.
- If you often have nausea after eating, speak with your healthcare team. It might be helpful to take nausea medications prescribed to you 30 minutes before you eat a meal.

Coping with a sore mouth or throat

A sore mouth or throat can make eating uncomfortable or difficult. Speak with your doctor or nurse about proper mouth care to manage pain and to lower the risk for infection. Here are some suggestions that may help you to stay well nourished:

- Select softer foods and fluids such as eggs, ground meats or poultry, fish, puddings, yogurt, cream soups, mashed potatoes, soft pasta or casseroles, smoothies, cereals soaked in milk or rice pudding.
- Limit hard foods such as crackers, nuts, toast with crust, hard fruits and vegetables, pretzels.
- Avoid foods and fluids that are spicy or acidic (e.g. tomatoes, citrus fruits, chili, hot sauces).
- Try sucking on ice chips or frozen fruit such as watermelon, grapes, peach slices or diced cantaloupe. Let hot food cool down a bit before eating.
- Drink fruit smoothies or milkshakes. Avoid adding fruit that contains small seeds, such as raspberries, strawberries and blackberries that can irritate a sore mouth or throat.
- Add broth, sauces (non-tomato), gravy or soup to soften and moisten foods.
- If helpful, use a straw to drink to limit contact with mouth sores.
- Do not use mouthwashes that contain alcohol. These can dry the mouth and increase pain.

Managing early satiety or fullness

Feeling full soon after eating can make it hard to eat enough to meet your nutrition needs. If you are feeling full because of constipation, speak to your doctor about medications that can help. Here are some other things you can do:

- Eat small meals many times during the day. Focusing on how often you eat instead of the amount eaten at one time often leads to eating more overall.
- Make every bite and every sip of fluid count by choosing foods and fluids that are high in energy and protein (see page 10).
- Focus on eating a protein and a grain/starch at beginning of meals before eating other lower energy foods.
- Eat lower fibre foods. Higher fibre foods like whole grains and vegetables can make you feel full faster and longer.
- Try not to drink fluids right before a meal. Drinking too much can make you feel full faster during meals.

Preparation: 15 Minutes Cooking: 15 minutes 4 Servings

Ricotta Penne

A colourful vegetarian pasta which can also be enjoyed cold.

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups dry penne pasta
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup extra smooth ricotta cheese
- 5 leaves sage, chopped (or 1 teaspoon dry)
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of water from boiling the pasta
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 cups green beans, cut lengthwise
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp black pepper
- 6 cherry tomatoes, cut in quarters
- 1 tbsp lemon zest

PREPARATION

1. In a large pot, bring water to boil and cook pasta according to instructions on package. After draining the cooked pasta keep $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of the water and set aside.
2. Transfer the cooked pasta back into the pot. Add the ricotta and the sage and stir to combine.
3. In a large frying pan over medium-heat, heat the olive oil. Add the beans, garlic and pepper and fry for 3-4 minutes, while paying attention not to burn the garlic.
4. Add the water and bring it to boil. Reduce the heat and continue to simmer until the beans are cooked (approximately 4 minutes).
5. Add the bean mixture to the pasta and cheese.
6. Add the tomatoes and gently stir.
7. Sprinkle with lemon zest and serve.

NUTRITION FACTS (PER SERVING: $\frac{1}{4}$ OF RECIPE)

Calories 380 / Protein 14 g / Fibre 4 g /
Carbohydrates 50 g / Total fat 15 g

Managing diarrhea

Diarrhea is when you have three or more loose or watery stools (“poops”) each day above your usual amount. Sometimes the stool happens suddenly. It may happen along with other symptoms such as cramping, nausea, vomiting, or dizziness.

Diarrhea can be caused by dumping syndrome, malabsorption (trouble absorbing the nutrients from your food), or treatment medications. Tips for managing diarrhea may be different depending on the cause.

CAUSES OF DIARRHEA

	Dumping Syndrome	Malabsorption	Treatment/medications
What is it and why does it happen?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">After a gastrectomy there is a loss of storage space (stomach) for food. This means that large amounts of nutrients are quickly emptied into the small bowel (intestine). Symptoms may be worse right after surgery and get better over time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Occurs when the digestive system is not able to absorb nutrients from the food you eat. This can be due to poor mixing of digestive enzymes with food, not enough digestive enzymes, or from small intestinal bacterial overgrowth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Chemotherapy drugs, radiation, or targeted therapy can damage the digestive tract leading to diarrhea. Diarrhea can also be caused by some medications that help with nausea and motility, and can be a side effect of antibiotics.
Symptoms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Cramps, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, sweating, fast heart rate, weakness, dizziness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Cramping, diarrhea, very smelly gas, floating or oily stool	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Gas, cramping, diarrhea, bloating, rectal pain
What you can do	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Eat 6 small meals a day. Small amounts of food at one time are less likely to trigger diarrhea.Limit food and fluids high in sugar such as juice, pop, candies, syrup.Limit oily, greasy, or deep-fried foods.Try a lower fibre diet (see page 9 for suggestions).Include easy-to-digest proteins such as egg, poultry, tofu, fish, yogurt, cottage cheese, protein powder.Choose low-lactose foods if high-lactose foods are making your symptoms worse.Limit foods high in sugar alcohols, e.g. sorbitol, mannitol, maltitol, xylitol.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Drink most of your fluids between meals instead of with your meals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Speak with your healthcare team about whether enzyme replacement therapy can help.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ask your team if changing your medications can help.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Eat slowly and chew foods very well.		

DID YOU KNOW...

There are two main types of dietary fibre:

SOLUBLE FIBRE (can dissolve in water)

INSOLUBLE FIBRE (does not dissolve in water)



Soluble fibre helps to slow the time it takes food to move through your gut, and can make stool more solid. This can be helpful if you have diarrhea.

Food sources of soluble fibre (choose)

- Peeled apples, bananas, oranges (no membrane)
- Skinless and mashed potatoes or yams, squash, cooked carrots
- Smooth peanut butter (1 tbsp at a time)
- Quick or rolled outs
- White bread without seeds
- Barley
- Psyllium



Insoluble fibre can speed up the movement of food through your gut, draws water into the stool and adds bulk to your stool (makes it larger). This may make your diarrhea worse.

Food sources of insoluble fibre (limit)

- Woody parts of vegetables (stems of broccoli, cauliflower, kale)
- Skin and seeds of fruits and vegetables
- Dried fruits
- Wheat bran
- Whole grain breads and cereals
- Legumes
- Whole nuts and seeds, popcorn



Getting extra energy and protein

These tips make it easy to boost both calories and protein in your diet with simple add-ins and swaps.

Add Calories

Oils & Fats: Stir oil, butter, margarine, or vegetable or coconut oil into oatmeal, hot cereal, soups, congee, or smoothies. Add oil and fats to veggies, rice, potatoes, toast, pancakes, waffles, or muffins.

Spreads & Dressings: Use mayonnaise, jams, honey, jelly, syrup, or nut butters on bread. Use in smoothies, yogurts, hot cereals. Add pesto to chicken or fish. Add extra dressing to salads. Add mayonnaise to tuna, salmon, eggs, chickpeas and enjoy with crackers.

Avocado: Prepare a dip, or spread avocado on sandwiches. Add to salads and smoothies.

Add Both (Energy & Protein)

Nuts & Seeds: Sprinkle nuts or seeds on cereal, yogurt, salads, or use nut or seed butters in baking, spreads, or smoothies.

Cheese & Cream cheese: Mix into scrambled eggs, pasta, potatoes, soups, or use as a snack. Add to dips and sandwich spreads.

Yogurt: Use Greek or Balkan yogurt, skyr, cottage cheese for dips. Add drinkable yogurt to smoothies and granola.

Milk & Alternatives: Use high fat and high protein milk (whipping cream, ultrafiltered, evaporated milk) in recipes that call for milk. Add cream, milk, ice cream, whipped cream to coffee, smoothies, and desserts. Use milk or cream in place of water for soups, cereals, mashed potatoes, or baking.

Add Protein

Meat & Fish: Add cooked ground meat, poultry, or canned tuna/salmon to pasta, casseroles, soups, congee, wraps, or salads. Add chopped meat to fried rice, stir fries, curries, or omelets. sandwiches. Use bone broth as a base for soups.

Eggs: Mix extra egg into pancake or waffle batter. Add eggs to salads, cornmeal, savoury oatmeal, breakfast hash, congee, or broth-based soups. Enjoy as a snack. Add a fried egg to noodle soup or ramen.

Legumes & Beans: Use bean dip (hummus, black bean dip) on crackers, pita, toast, sandwiches. Mix chickpeas and avocado as an egg salad alternative. Add legumes to salads, soups, and casseroles.

Meat Alternatives: Add tofu, tempeh, seitan, or plant-based meat substitutes to stir fries, rice bowls, salads, scrambled eggs, omelets, soups, pasta, sandwiches or wraps.

Protein Powders: Mix whey, soy, rice, hemp protein powder or powdered milk into smoothies, hot cereal, congee, pudding or yogurt. Add to scrambled eggs, sauces, casseroles, pancake or waffle batter, and other baking recipes.

Quick Tips

- ✓ Add extra fat or protein to any meal or snack.
- ✓ Use higher-fat dairy or plant based alternative.
- ✓ Mix nuts, seeds or protein powder to pancake or muffin batters, foods, drinks.
- ✓ Choose foods and recipes that combine both energy and protein.

Can I eat sugar?

- Both healthy cells and cancer cells use sugar for energy, which comes from carbohydrate-rich foods like fruit, vegetables, whole grains, and dairy, as well as added sugars.
- Some people with stomach cancer think they must avoid all sugar to stop cancer cells from growing.
- If you eat no carbohydrates, your body will break down fat and muscle for energy. Cancer cells use a lot of sugar because they grow quickly, but scientific evidence does not show that avoiding carbohydrates or sugar will prevent cancer, stop existing cancer cells from growing, or help with treatment.
- A very low-carbohydrate diet can deprive you of important energy, fibre, and vitamins, especially if you struggle to eat enough. This can be harmful if you are losing weight and muscle due to symptoms or side effects.

Why do cancer prevention guidelines recommend limiting added sugar in the diet if a low sugar diet doesn't prevent cancer?

- While there is no direct link between added sugar intake and stomach cancer, food and drinks high in added sugars may lead to gaining excess weight. Being at a higher weight or having excess fat cells can increase the risk for many types of cancer. If you are eating well, you can aim to lower the amount of added sugar in your diet as part of a healthful eating pattern. Focus on eating foods that will help you feel stronger, provide nutrients to help you recover, and provide enjoyment.



Adapting to a new normal

Stomach cancer, its treatment and related side effects can leave you wondering what to eat! For most people with cancer of the stomach eating and weight loss are a concern during and beyond treatment. This next section can help you choose foods that are enjoyable and well tolerated.

Preparation: 10 Minutes Cooking: 20 Minutes 6 Servings

Frittata Muffins

Wholesome egg dish that can be prepared in advance and reheated in portions.

INGREDIENTS

Non-stick cooking spray or
1 tsp vegetable oil

2 tsp olive oil

½ cup leeks, washed and sliced

½ cup red pepper, diced

6 tsp soft cheese (ex. Brie)

1 tbsp fresh basil, finely chopped

5 extra large eggs

⅛ tsp ground black pepper

PREPARATION

1. Preheat oven to 350°F (conventional oven). Grease muffin tins with non-stick cooking spray or vegetable oil.
2. Heat olive oil over medium heat in skillet. Add leeks and red pepper and sauté until tender. Divide vegetables among 6 muffin tins.
3. Place one teaspoon of cheese into each muffin tin and sprinkle with basil.
4. Whisk the eggs and season them with black pepper. Pour them over the herbed vegetable and cheese mixture in each compartment.
5. Bake the muffins for approximately 20 minutes or until the eggs are firm to the touch.

NUTRITION FACTS (PER SERVING: 1 MUFFIN) Calories 100 kcal / Protein 7 g / Carbohydrates 2 g / Fibre 0 g / Total Fat 7 g

Building a balanced plate

Plate models can be useful tools to help you plan balanced meals and ensure you get the nutrients your body needs.

Our balanced plate has been specifically designed for people who may not be able to eat their previous “normal-sized” meals and who may

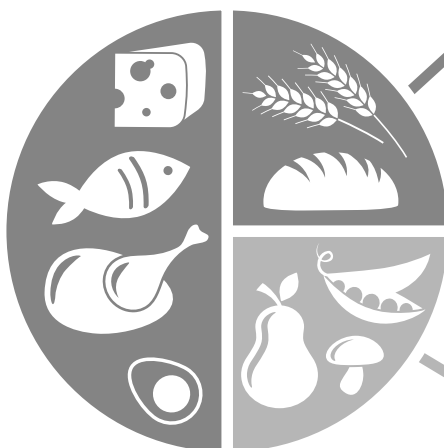
have trouble including enough protein. You may want to eat at least five small meals and snacks per day if you:

- Feel full quickly after eating
- Are losing weight
- Have had surgery to remove all or part of your stomach

Choose a smaller-sized plate for EACH MEAL and fill it using the suggestions below:

PROTEIN

- Choose fish, seafood, poultry, eggs, nuts and seeds, nut butters, cheese, yogurt, tofu, tempeh, seitan, legumes (beans, lentils, chickpeas), red meat (beef, pork, game)



WHOLE GRAINS

- Choose whole grains if tolerated, such as brown or wild rice, whole grain breads, hot or cold cereals, pasta or couscous, quinoa, farro, bulgur, barley, kamut

VEGETABLES & FRUIT

- Select a variety of different coloured vegetables and fruit



HEALTHY FATS

- Use plant-based oils such as olive, canola, grapeseed, sunflower, avocado, or vegetable oil for cooking, on salads or cooked vegetables, with soups or smoothies and at the table (use extra if you are losing weight)

FLUIDS

- Choose water, milk, fortified non-dairy beverages, lightly steeped or decaffeinated tea
- Homemade smoothies, or ready-to-drink high-calorie and/or high-protein shakes
- Coffee counts as fluid, but drink no more than 3 cups per day due to the caffeine content (aim for less than 400 mg of caffeine per day)
- Limit sugary drinks such as soda and fruit juices
- Drink fluids between meals
- Try popsicles or ice chips for extra fluid if you are having trouble drinking fluids regularly
- Drink at least 6-8 cups of fluids per day (choose fluids that are high in calories, protein if you are losing weight)

For snacks, try to include a protein plus either a whole grain or a vegetable & fruit choice.

Modifying the texture of your food

Many people with stomach cancer – especially those who have had surgery – or are undergoing treatment often find soft, moist foods easier to eat. Below is a guide to foods that may be easier to eat if you are having difficulty eating regular foods.

PROTEIN CHOICES

Soft and pureed options

Meat and poultry

- Bite sized pieces of meat or poultry that have been slow-cooked until tender
- Ground meat or poultry (meatloaf with gravy, meatballs, soft casseroles)
- Pureed meat or poultry
- Chicken salad

Seafood

- Soft, flaky fish (baked or steamed) with sauce
- Seafood spreads
- Tuna salad, salmon salad
- Fish or seafood chowder

Eggs

- Egg salad
- Scrambled or soft-cooked eggs
- Quiche or soufflé
- Egg custards

Plant-based protein

- Tofu in soft, moist, smooth dishes
- Pureed legumes

- Smooth nut butters blended into ice cream, smoothies or hot cereals
- Refried beans, bean spreads or dip (hummus)

Dairy and alternatives

- Soft cheeses such as cottage, ricotta or feta
- Soft-cooked pasta with cheese sauce
- Flavoured or plain Greek yogurt
- Puddings made with milk or soy beverage

Liquid options

- Milk or soy beverage
- Blended cream soups
- Blended soup with added beans, milk or soy beverage
- Bone broths
- Smoothies made with milk, soy beverage or yogurt
- Oral nutritional supplements
- Buttermilk
- Eggnog
- Yogurt drinks
- Kefir
- Milkshakes

WHOLE GRAIN CHOICES

Soft and pureed options

- Soft breads moistened with sauce or syrup or dunked in fluid
- Soft-cooked smooth hot cereals (oatmeal, cream of wheat, cream of rice)
- Dry cereals softened in milk

- Soft-cooked pasta
- Well-cooked rice (cooked with extra water) with added gravy or sauce
- Quinoa or couscous with added gravy or sauce

Liquid options

- Blended soups containing pasta, rice, potatoes or legumes

VEGETABLES AND FRUIT CHOICES

Soft and pureed options

- Soft-cooked or pureed vegetables cooked without seeds or skins
- Vegetable souffles
- Mashed or pureed vegetables (potatoes, yams, carrots, beets, cauliflower, pumpkin or squash)
- Vegetable juices or nectars
- Fruit blended into smoothies
- Creamed corn

- Soft-cooked, mashed beans and peas
- Soft-cooked, canned or pureed fruits (remove seeds)
- Soft, ripe bananas
- Applesauce

Liquid options

- Vegetable juices or nectars
- Blended vegetable soups
- Fruit blended into smoothies



How to modify your meal plan to increase calories and protein

This meal plan provides 1300 calories, 66g protein, 152g carbohydrate, 45g fat

BREAKFAST
1 small orange + ¾ cup plain oatmeal + ⅓ cup 2% milk
SNACK
¾ cup plain Greek yogurt + 1 small banana
LUNCH
2 Frittata muffins (see recipe)
SNACK
6 whole grain crackers
DINNER
75g salmon + ½ cup cooked quinoa or rice + ½ cup cooked carrots
SNACK
½ cup canned peaches + ½ cup rich vanilla ice cream

Some small tweaks can increase the calories by 50% and protein by 20%!

The modified meal plan now provides: 2,100 calories, 79g protein; 203g carbohydrate; 115g fat

BREAKFAST
Add 1 Tbsp maple syrup switch from 2% milk to whole milk
SNACK
Make a smoothie by adding the following extra ingredients: ¼ cup whole milk or fortified soy beverage, 1 Tbsp canola oil, 1 Tbsp ground nuts
LUNCH
Include ¼ avocado and 1 slice of whole grain toast with 2 tsp of butter or margarine as a side dish
SNACK
Add 2 Tbsp smooth peanut butter or hummus to crackers
DINNER
Add 1 Tbsp olive oil to carrots
SNACK
Add 1 Tbsp chopped nuts to peaches and ice cream

Nourishing fluids

Nourishing fluids like smoothies or ready-to-drink nutrition supplements can help you get extra vitamins, minerals, calories, and protein when eating is difficult.

Homemade smoothies are easy to customize for your taste, symptoms, and nutrition needs. You control the flavour, texture, sugar, protein, fat, and fibre. Try our homemade energy drink and find more recipes in the resource section on page 23.

Ready-to-drink nutrition supplements are convenient if you're tired or busy. You can drink them alone, add them to cereal, use them as coffee creamer,

blend them into smoothies, make popsicles, or mix them into recipes. Many types are available: high-calorie, high-protein, low-sugar, plant-based, vegan, or juice-based. If you're not eating well or losing weight, choose a supplement with over 300 calories and at least 15 grams of protein per bottle.

It may take time to find options you like and tolerate. You can also mix in different ingredients for variety. If supplements are too sweet or thick, try mixing them with milk, non-dairy drinks, water, or extra ice. Adding plain yogurt or soft tofu can reduce sweetness and add protein. Try them ice cold, or blend with ice cream for a milkshake.

Preparation: 10 Minutes 1 Serving

Maximize Energy Drink

This nutritious drink provides you with protein and calories on days when your appetite is not great!

INGREDIENTS

½ cup milk (2%)	1 tbsp oats
½ cup pasteurized liquid eggs	1 tbsp vegetable oil
¼ cup strawberries, sliced	2 tbsp honey

PREPARATION

1. Place all ingredients in a blender.
2. Mix until smooth.
3. Serve immediately.

NUTRITION FACTS (PER SERVING: 1 CUP)

Calories 400 kcal / Protein 15 g /
Carbohydrates 52 g / Fibre 2 g / Total Fat 17 g





Tips for preparing meals at home

MAKE A PLAN

- Plan for the week and decide which 3 meals and 3 snacks you will have each day.
- Look for new recipe ideas and keep track of those that work well for you.
- Try using Artificial Intelligence (AI) search engines for meal plans, recipes, and grocery lists. You can be very precise in your searches. Example: *"7-day high calorie and protein meal plan with 3 meals and snacks for small appetite. I don't eat beef"* It will give you many ideas and you can also get a grocery list.

SHOP SMART

- As you plan your meals and snacks, add the necessary items to your grocery list.
- Keep a shopping "checklist" for the week. Make sure to buy proteins, grain products (bread, pasta, rice), fruits and vegetables needed for making complete meals.

COOKING TIPS

- Use a variety of cooking methods! Baking, roasting, braising, stewing, broiling, steaming and grilling — whatever is most convenient for you.
- Air fryers and pressure cookers can speed up cooking times. Slow cooking can also save time with a busy schedule.
- Try roasting vegetables, potatoes and meats/ fish or frozen convenience foods in air fryers.
- Find recipes for pressure cooking online. It is great for making stews/casseroles/soups but can also be used to batch cook rice and beans that you can portion out after for use over several meals.
- Add moisture to meals. It makes chewing and eating easier and helps to add variety and flavour to food.
- Marinade larger amounts of meat and freeze in portions. Marinating meats in advance will help tenderize, flavour and add moisture to meats and help decrease cooking time.

MEAL PREP AND PLANNING

- Cook larger batches when you have time, portion out for later.
- Save leftovers for the next day.
- Buy prepared proteins (like rotisserie chicken) or other hot entrees from the grocery store.
- Keep convenience foods (frozen, heat-and-serve meals) on hand for quick options.
- Use canned soups or stews as a base—add your own protein and veggies for a complete meal.

GETTING HELP

- Ask friends or family to help with meal prep.
- Consider prepared meals or meal kits if you are unable to cook.
- Use grocery delivery if you are too tired to shop.

IDEAS FOR QUICK, NUTRITIOUS MEALS AND SNACKS

- Muffins, scones, or buns with nut/seed butter, jam, or cheese
- Tuna mixed with avocado on bread or crackers
- Pasta with ground meat or poultry sauce
- Cottage cheese with fruit
- Frozen, heat-and-serve snacks (mini quiche, meat pies, egg bites, breaded fish/chicken)
- Cheese and crackers
- Yogurt, yogurt drinks, or pudding
- Soup with grated cheese
- Energy/protein bars, trail mix
- Cereal with whole milk or soy beverage, or dry
- Handful of nuts
- Eggs or cheese on toast



Tips for eating away from home

RESTAURANT EATING

- Check menus online ahead of time and plan your meal.
- Allow time to discuss your dietary needs with your server or chef.
- Ask about ingredients and how dishes are prepared.
- Ask for substitutions or create your own meal if needed.
- For softer foods, choose soups, casseroles, stews, or pasta.
- Have a small snack before you leave home.

MANAGING PORTIONS

- Avoid overeating by eating half your meal and taking the rest home or share with someone.
- Order from the lunch or kids' menu for smaller portions.
- Choose 1-2 appetizers instead of a full meal.
- Skip bread or appetizers to save room for your entrée.
- Eat slowly and chew well, especially in social settings.
- It's okay to leave food on your plate.

VISITING FRIENDS AND FAMILY

- Let your host know about any dietary restrictions or texture needs in advance.
- Ask for a smaller portion or serve yourself.
- Suggest a potluck or bring a dish you know you can eat.
- Relax and enjoy your time—being at ease can make eating away from home more pleasant.



Survivorship and living with stomach cancer

No matter where you are in your stomach cancer journey—newly diagnosed, in treatment, taking a break, preparing for surgery, recovering, or finished with treatment—you may wonder what life will look like now.

Some eating-related side effects may persist, but don't get discouraged; adapting takes time. Strategies that help manage symptoms during treatment can also be useful throughout survivorship. While your eating habits may change, you can still make choices to help you feel your best.

AM I ON THE RIGHT PATH?

Use these questions to check your progress:

- Are my symptoms improving?
- Is my energy increasing?
- Do I feel like eating and drinking regularly?
- Can I prepare meals without needing to rest, or do I still need help?
- Am I able to be more active than before?



How many calories and how much protein do I need?

Calorie and protein needs vary for each person. Many people with stomach cancer struggle to maintain their weight and may face ongoing challenges that make gaining weight difficult. Some may not return to their pre-cancer weight. Treatments like chemotherapy, surgery, or the cancer itself can increase your body's calorie and protein needs.

Most people with stomach cancer will lose weight with and without treatment or surgery which can cause some distress and worry. You are not alone. Working with your healthcare team and dietitians can help minimize weight loss and manage symptoms. They can offer guidance to help you get the most from what you eat and drink. If you keep losing weight or have more difficulty eating, contact your healthcare team to learn more about your nutrition goals and how to meet them.

Is exercise good for me?

Physical activity offers many benefits for people with cancer. It can ease treatment side effects, improve mood and sleep, reduce anxiety and depression, support bone health, increase energy, lessen fatigue, and enhance quality of life.

How much should I exercise?

- If you're new to exercise, start slowly—try 10 minutes of light activity and gradually increase as you feel able.
- Listen to your body and rest when needed.
- It's normal not to always meet your exercise goals.
- Always check with your healthcare team before starting any new exercise routine.



Preparation: 10 Minutes + 1 hour marinating Cooking: 15 Minutes 4 Servings

Lemon Chicken

Add any vegetable you like to our versatile marinated lemon chicken.

INGREDIENTS

580 g chicken breasts, boneless, skinless

1 yellow bell pepper

½ red onion

4 skewers

Marinade

2 tablespoons mayonnaise

¼ cup fresh cilantro chopped

2 cloves garlic minced

1 lemon (juice + zest)

PREPARATION

1. Cut the chicken breast into 16 cubes of similar size.
2. In a bowl, combine the mayonnaise, cilantro, garlic, juice and lemon zest. Add the chicken cubes and turn them in the marinade. Cover and refrigerate for a minimum of 1 hour.
3. Cut the bell pepper into 12 pieces. Cut 12 slices of onion.
4. Soak wooden skewers in water for a few minutes to prevent them from burning. Make 4 skewers by alternating chicken, onion and peppers.
5. Cook on the barbecue: heat BBQ on high, then reduce temperature to medium. Turn the skewers halfway through cooking. Or bake them in preheated oven at 450°F. Place skewers on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Cook until internal temperature reads 165°F.
6. Serve with rice, coleslaw, and sauce of your choice.

NUTRITION FACTS (PER SERVING: ¼ OF RECIPE)

Calories 219 Kcal / Protein 33 g / Fibre 1 g / Carbohydrates 8 g / Total fat 6 g

What about vitamin and mineral supplements?

Normally, eating a variety of foods provides all the vitamins and minerals your body needs. However, treatment for stomach cancer can make it harder to digest and absorb nutrients like iron, calcium, vitamin D, folate, and vitamin B₁₂. If you've had surgery, you may need to take certain vitamin and mineral supplements long-term to prevent deficiencies. Deficiencies can negatively affect your health.

Talk to your doctor about whether you need blood tests to monitor for deficiencies, especially during the first year after treatment or surgery. Most people who have had stomach surgery should have their iron and vitamin B₁₂ levels checked at least once a year.



Always consult your healthcare team before starting any supplements to ensure proper dosage and avoid interactions with medications.

Below is a list of common foods that can help you get more of these vitamins and minerals.

IRON

Meat (beef, pork, chicken)
Liver
Instant oatmeal, breakfast cereals
Spinach, cooked
Tofu, cooked

VITAMIN D

Yogurt
Salmon
Egg, yolk, cooked

CALCIUM

Cow's milk
Fortified rice, cashew, almond, soy beverages
Tofu
Yogurt
Cheeses

FOLATE

Cooked legumes, beans
Cooked green leafy vegetables
Enriched pasta, cereals, flour used for baking

VITAMIN B₁₂

Liver
Salmon, tuna, sardines, trout
Shellfish
Fortified milks, milk alternatives, yogurts, cereals
Meat (beef, turkey)
Nutritional yeast

RESOURCES

Physical Activity

- [Canadian Cancer Society](#)
- [Cancer Care Ontario](#)

Improving Nutrition Intake

- [Canadian Cancer Society: Eating well when you have cancer](#)
- [Alberta Health Services: Meal and snack ideas](#)
- [Alberta Health Services: Adding calories and protein](#)

Recipes

- [Cooking with joy](#)
- [Gesundheit Kitchen](#)
- [ELLICSR Kitchen](#)
- [BC Cancer: Oncology Nutrition, Nourishing liquids](#)

- [Alberta Health Services: Recipes](#)
- [High Protein Cookbook](#)
- [Making smoothies with more calories](#)
- [Nutrition supplements](#)

Websites

- [My Gut Feeling Stomach Cancer Foundation of Canada](#)
- [Canadian Gastric Cancer Association](#)
- [Canadian Cancer Society](#)
- [Nourish: Canada's Nutrition Companion for Oncology Patients and Caregivers](#)
- [American Institute for Cancer Research](#)

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Eating and Living Well with Stomach Cancer

This guide is dedicated to people
diagnosed with gastric cancer and
to their partners in care.

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