

unintended weight gain

Cancer

Though most people think they will lose weight after a cancer diagnosis, it is also possible to gain weight. This unintended weight gain can be due to a variety of reasons. Reasons including treatments, or certain medications, like hormone therapy, that can cause weight gain or make you feel hungrier. Fatigue, from both cancer and its treatment, can lead to a decrease in activity, which can also cause weight gain. Emotional side effects, such as depression or anxiety, may lead to weight gain as well.

Managing with Nutrition:

- Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables – Fruits and vegetables are filled with nutrients and fiber, so they fill you up without a lot of calories.
- Choose lean protein – Top picks include white meat poultry, fish, shellfish, beans, eggs, and tofu.
- Make half your grains whole grains – Fiber-rich whole grain foods like whole grain breads, cereals and pastas, brown rice, and popcorn fill you up and provide valuable vitamins and minerals.
- Focus on low-fat dairy – Choose skim or 1% milk, yogurt and cheese.
- Cook using low-fat cooking methods, such as baking, broiling, grilling, steaming, or roasting.
- Choose foods with less fat and sugar – Look at the nutrition label and choose food items with a low %DV.
- Keep portion sizes in check.
- Try the American Institute for Cancer Research (AICR) New American Plate method – Aim for meals made up of 2/3 (or more) vegetables, fruits, whole grains, or beans and 1/3 (or less) animal protein.

Avoid:

- Sugar-sweetened beverages
- Fried food, such as French fries and potato chips
- Enriched white flour products, like white bread, bagels, crackers, and white pasta
- Candy
- Fruit drinks
- Desserts, such as pastries, cookies, cakes and ice cream
- Alcohol
- High-calorie foods and drinks like pizza, nachos, and specialty coffee drinks

Additional Tips:

- Keep a food journal – Track what you eat and drink to become more mindful of how much you're eating and drinking.
- Be physically active – Exercise not only burns calories but may help to improve your mood as well.
- Talk with a dietitian for more ideas to keep your weight in check while undergoing cancer treatment and beyond.