



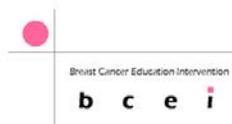
NUTRITION TO FIGHT FATIGUE

A poor diet and or not eating enough calories aren't the only reasons for fatigue or tiredness, but a good diet can improve your fatigue. Think of food as a needed part of your healing. Remember, you need to eat enough food so that your body can have the energy to heal itself. The National Cancer Institute recommends eating the following types of foods:

- A variety of foods every day.
- Fruits and vegetables—raw or cooked. These give you vitamins, minerals and fiber.
- Grains - whole grains such as cereal, bread, and pasta. These give you vitamins, minerals and fiber.
- Low fat dairy products—milk, cheese, yogurt, and ice cream - These supply protein, calcium, and several vitamins.
- Lean meats such as poultry, such as turkey or chicken or lean cuts of beef or pork. These supply protein.

Here are some tips for eating to increase your energy:

- **Start your day with a good breakfast.** Try to include at least 1/3 of your protein requirements in this meal such as eggs or lean meats. Unlike carbohydrates (toast, cereal), proteins provide you with long lasting energy, and will help you keep your energy throughout the day.
- **Increase protein** food sources such as lean meat, fish, and low-fat dairy products.
- **Eat plenty of iron rich foods** like lean red meats, poultry, dark green vegetables and dried fruits.
- **Eat several small meals** rather than three large meals.
- **Exercise lightly** prior to meals to improve your appetite. Some people find that a walk before meals is a good way to improve the appetite.



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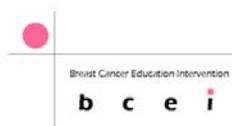


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- **Drink plenty of liquids (8-10 glasses of fluid/day).** Lack of fluids will increase your feelings of fatigue. But don't drink *with* your meals—fluids can make you feel full faster. Instead drink most of your fluids between meals.
- **Eat when you are hungry.** Try to take advantage of the times when your appetite is best.
- **Eat what you like, within reason.** You can't expect a diet of milkshakes alone to make you feel better. Try to keep a well balanced diet, but pick the foods you like from each food group.
- **Avoid caffeine and white or refined sugars (cookies, cake or candy).** While these products are OK in moderation, (they may even give you a quick boost!) they tend to cause a rapid rise and fall in your blood sugar, and will leave you more tired.
- **Limit foods high in fat, salt and sugar.**
- **Limit alcohol intake, particularly close to bedtime.** This can cause waking during the nighttime, and not allow you to get the deep sleep that you need.
- **Limit foods that are smoked or pickled.**
- **If you are losing weight, try a nutritional supplement such as Ensure between meals (not in place of them).**
- **Try lower fat cooking methods such as broiling, steaming and poaching.**
- **Make mealtime an enjoyable activity.** Share meals with family and friends. Put flowers on the table. Candles or soft music can make mealtime more pleasant.
- **Vary your diet/try new recipes.** Some people find foods taste differently after cancer treatment— trying new foods or different seasonings may make foods tastier.

If you find you are not eating because you are too tired to prepare your meals:

- Consider pre-packaged/frozen meals at least once a week.



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- Ask friends and family for help with meals.
- Prepare larger amounts when you do cook and freeze the extra food in single serving containers for easy reheating.
- Use paper plates and cups to cut down on cleanup.
- **Keep a diary** of what and when you eat every day and how it affects your fatigue.

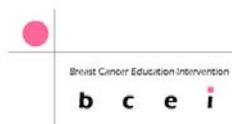
Ask your doctor or nurse for any brochures/booklets that give advice about diet. You can also ask your doctor to refer you to a dietician, who can give you helpful ideas.

When Do You Need To Seek Help?

You should always keep your doctor or nurse informed about feelings of tiredness. Be sure to notify them at once if you are unable to eat for a day or more, lose more than 5 lbs, experience pain while eating, vomit for more than 24 hours, are unable to urinate for 24 hrs or if your urine is bad smelling or rare and very thick.

Useful websites:

- <http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=50498>
- <http://www.breastcancer.org/tips/nutrition>



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