

Nourish and Soothe: A Practical Guide with Recipes for Managing Nutrition During Cancer Treatment



The journey through cancer treatment, particularly chemotherapy, is a profound challenge, both physically and emotionally. This guide serves as a partner during this difficult time, providing evidence-based strategies and gentle recipes to help maintain strength and preserve quality of life through proper nutrition.



 This guide is intended to be used in partnership with your professional healthcare team. This is not medical advice or a substitute for medical advice and guidance. Maintain open communication with your doctor, oncology nurses, and especially a registered dietitian for personalized advice.

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Nutrition as Your Foundation of Support

The treatments designed to heal can bring significant side effects, with nausea and oral mucositis being among the most common and distressing. Patients often describe the pain of mucositis in stark terms, with some saying *"it feels like I'm swallowing razor blades"*.

This discomfort, combined with persistent nausea, can transform eating—once a source of pleasure and sustenance—into a source of anxiety and dread.



- i Good nutrition is not an optional extra but a foundational component of cancer care. Eating well before, during, and after treatment can help individuals feel better, stay stronger, and better tolerate the rigors of therapy.

Evidence-Based Approach to Healing Nutrition

National Cancer Institute

Comprehensive guidelines for eating during treatment

American Cancer Society

Evidence-based nutritional recommendations

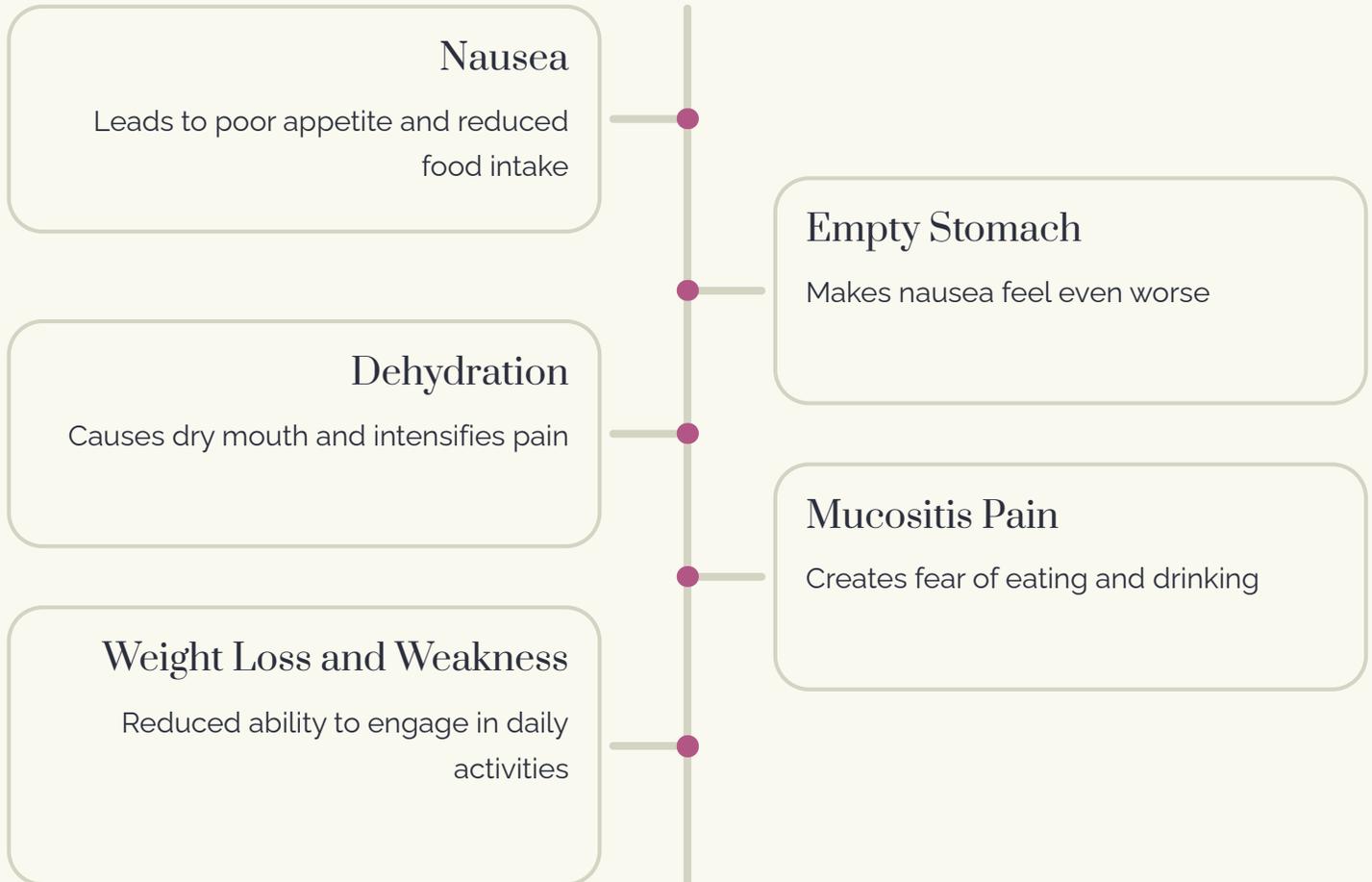
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Clinical practice insights and practical strategies

The recommendations and recipes that follow are grounded in extensive clinical practice and a comprehensive review of evidence-based guidelines from world-leading institutions - alongside real recipes and tips shared by real patients. The goal is to provide scientifically sound, practical, and achievable strategies to help navigate the nutritional challenges of chemotherapy with confidence and a sense of control.

Understanding the Symptom Cascade

Chemotherapy side effects rarely occur in isolation. Instead, they often create a challenging cycle where one symptom exacerbates another. Understanding this cascade is the first step to breaking it.



Breaking the Cycle: Multi-Purpose Food Solutions

The Power of Strategic Nutrition

The most effective nutritional strategies are those that break the symptom cascade at multiple points. A single, well-chosen food can serve as a multi-purpose tool.

For example, a cool, nutrient-dense smoothie can simultaneously combat several issues: its cold temperature soothes a sore mouth, its liquid consistency bypasses painful chewing, it provides essential hydration, and it can be fortified with protein and calories.



By viewing nutrition through this strategic lens, food becomes a powerful intervention to disrupt the vicious cycle of side effects and support the body's resilience.

Taming Nausea: Your First Line of Defense

1 Eat Small, Frequent Meals

An empty stomach can trigger or worsen nausea. Eating small portions every two to three hours maintains stable blood sugar and prevents the stomach from becoming too full or too empty.

2 Mind Temperature and Aroma

Hot foods release stronger odors that can trigger nausea. Foods served cold or at room temperature are generally better tolerated.

3 Choose Bland and Dry Foods

During acute nausea, simple starchy foods are easiest on the digestive system. The BRAT diet—Bananas, Rice, Applesauce, and Toast—is a classic starting point.

4 Utilize Therapeutic Ingredients

Ginger is widely recognized for its anti-nausea properties. Mint and lemon can also provide soothing relief when tolerated.

The BRAT Diet Foundation



Bananas

Rich in potassium, easy to digest, and naturally sweet. Perfect for replacing electrolytes lost through vomiting.



Rice

Bland, starchy, and binding. Helps settle the stomach and provides gentle energy without irritation.



Applesauce

Smooth texture, mild flavor, and natural pectin help soothe the digestive system and provide gentle nutrition.



Toast

Dry, bland carbohydrate that absorbs stomach acid and provides stable energy without overwhelming the system.



Natural Anti-Nausea Remedies



Ginger: Nature's Anti-Nausea Medicine

- Fresh ginger tea
- Non-alcoholic ginger ale
- Crystallized ginger
- Fresh ginger in cooking

Mint: Soothing and Refreshing

- Peppermint tea
- Fresh mint in water
- Mint-infused smoothies

Lemon: Gentle Citrus Relief

- Lemon water (when mouth isn't sore)
- Lemon essential oil aromatherapy

Foods to Avoid During Nausea

Spicy Foods

Hot peppers, chili powder, and heavily seasoned dishes can irritate the stomach and worsen nausea.

Greasy and Fried Foods

High-fat foods are difficult to digest and can trigger or intensify nausea symptoms.

Overly Sweet Foods

Rich desserts and sugary treats can overwhelm the digestive system during sensitive periods.

Strong-Smelling Foods

Foods with powerful aromas can trigger nausea before you even take a bite.

Soothing a Sore Mouth and Throat

Mucositis requires a careful approach to food texture, temperature, and ingredients to avoid irritation and promote healing. The key is understanding the texture spectrum and how to navigate it based on symptom severity.



Liquids

Broths, smoothies, nutritional drinks



Puréed Foods

Blended soups, mashed vegetables



Soft Solids

Scrambled eggs, well-cooked pasta

The Importance of Moisture in Every Bite

Making Foods Mouth-Friendly

Dry and rough-textured foods can feel abrasive and cause significant pain. All foods should be soft and moist to minimize discomfort.

Moisture-Adding Techniques:

- Add broths to dry foods
- Use mild gravies and cream sauces
- Dunk bread or crackers in milk
- Blend extra liquid into puréed foods
- Serve foods with yogurt or sour cream



Temperature Matters: Cool Comfort



Cool Foods

Room temperature or chilled foods are generally more soothing than hot items



Frozen Relief

Fruit popsicles, frozen melon chunks, and ice chips provide temporary numbing



Lukewarm Options

When warm food is desired, ensure it's just lukewarm to avoid irritation

Foods that are very hot can irritate a sore mouth, while cool temperatures often provide welcome relief and can help numb painful areas.

Foods to Strictly Avoid with Mouth Sores

Acidic Foods

- Citrus fruits (oranges, lemons, grapefruit)
- Tomatoes and tomato-based products
- Pineapple
- Vinegar-based dressings

Spicy and Salty Foods

- Hot peppers and chili powder
- Heavily salted snacks
- Spicy sauces and seasonings
- Pickled foods

Rough-Textured Foods

- Nuts and seeds
- Hard crackers and toast
- Raw vegetables
- Granola and crunchy cereals

Alcohol

- All alcoholic beverages
- Mouthwashes containing alcohol
- Cooking wines (use alcohol-free versions)

Oral Hygiene for Healing

Gentle Mouth Care Protocol

Good oral care is essential for healing and preventing infection. The goal is to clean without causing additional irritation.

Recommended Rinse Recipe:

- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 2 cups warm water
- Mix until dissolved
- Rinse gently before and after meals



- This mild solution helps clean the mouth and neutralize acids without causing irritation, promoting faster healing of mouth sores.

Maximizing Every Bite: Nutritional Stealth

When appetite is low and every bite is an effort, it's crucial to make each spoonful as nutritionally potent as possible. This strategy focuses on fortifying familiar, well-tolerated foods with extra calories and protein without significantly increasing volume.

The goal is to increase the density of the food, not the volume. This approach allows for meeting the body's increased needs for healing and energy without the pressure of eating larger portions.

Calorie Boosters: Healthy Fats



Olive Oil

Drizzle over soups, pasta, rice, and cooked vegetables. Each tablespoon adds 120 calories with heart-healthy monounsaturated fats.



Avocado

Blend into smoothies or mash onto soft bread. Half an avocado provides 160 calories and creamy texture that's easy to swallow.



Heavy Cream

Add to mashed potatoes, sauces, and casseroles. One tablespoon contributes 50 calories and creates rich, smooth textures.

Protein Boosters: Building Blocks for Healing

25g

Protein Powder

One scoop of unflavored whey protein adds substantial protein to smoothies and puddings

12g

Greek Yogurt

Half cup of full-fat Greek yogurt provides high-quality protein in a smooth, easy-to-swallow form

8g

Milk Powder

Quarter cup of skim milk powder blends invisibly into liquids and soft foods

7g

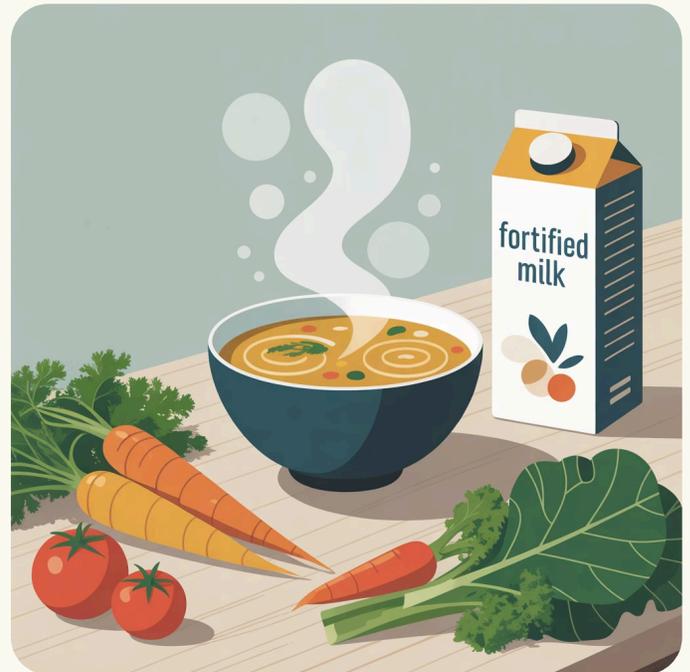
Cheese

Quarter cup of grated mild cheese melts easily into eggs, potatoes, and pasta

Nutrient-Dense Liquid Substitutions

Upgrade Your Cooking Liquids

Whenever a recipe calls for water, consider if a more nutritious liquid can be used instead. This simple swap can dramatically increase the nutritional value of familiar foods.



01

Double-Strength Milk

Cook oatmeal with 1 cup whole milk plus 1/4 cup skim milk powder instead of water

02

Bone Broth Base

Use chicken or bone broth as a base for cooking rice or noodles to add minerals and flavor

03

Coconut Milk

Replace water in smoothies with coconut milk for healthy fats and tropical flavor

Navigating the Flavor Paradox

A significant challenge during chemotherapy is the "flavor paradox." Nausea and mucositis create a need for bland foods, while treatment can cause taste changes that make bland food completely unappetizing. The solution is using a specific palette of "safe" seasonings.

For Nausea

Ginger is the primary tool - its gentle spice helps quell nausea without being aggressive

For Blandness

Gentle herbs like basil, parsley, dill, rosemary, and thyme add dimension without irritation

For Metallic Tastes

Umami-rich ingredients like mushroom broth or miso paste add savory depth

At-a-Glance Guide to Managing Side Effects

If You Are Experiencing...	Foods to Choose	Foods to Avoid
Nausea / Vomiting	Cold or room-temperature foods, bland/dry foods (crackers, toast, pretzels), starchy foods (rice, potatoes), BRAT diet, ginger, mint, clear liquids	Spicy, greasy, fried, or overly sweet foods, foods with strong smells, large meals, drinking liquids with meals
Sore Mouth / Throat (Mucositis)	Soft, moist, or pureed foods (smoothies, soups, casseroles, scrambled eggs, yogurt), cool or lukewarm foods, non-acidic fruits	Acidic foods (citrus, tomatoes), spicy or salty foods, rough/dry foods (nuts, hard crackers, raw vegetables), very hot foods, alcohol
Poor Appetite / Weight Loss	Small, frequent, nutrient-dense meals and snacks. High-calorie, high-protein foods like milkshakes, smoothies, avocados, nut butters, cheese, eggs	Low-calorie or "diet" foods, filling up on low-calorie liquids like water or black coffee with meals

Easy Calorie and Protein Boosters Reference

Booster	How to Use It	Calories per Serving	Protein (g) per Serving
Olive Oil (1 tbsp)	Drizzle on soups, pasta, potatoes, vegetables	120	0
Avocado (1/2 fruit)	Blend into smoothies, mash on toast, add to soups	160	2
Heavy Cream (1 tbsp)	Add to soups, sauces, mashed potatoes, oatmeal	50	0
Greek Yogurt (1/2 cup)	Mix into smoothies, top soft fruit, use in place of sour cream	115	12
Skim Milk Powder (1/4 cup)	Blend into milk, smoothies, soups, casseroles, oatmeal	80	8
Peanut Butter (2 tbsp)	Spread on soft bread, add to smoothies/shakes, dip for bananas	190	7
Protein Powder (1 scoop)	Blend into smoothies, shakes, yogurt, pudding	100-120	20-25

Soothing Sips & Hydrating Drinks

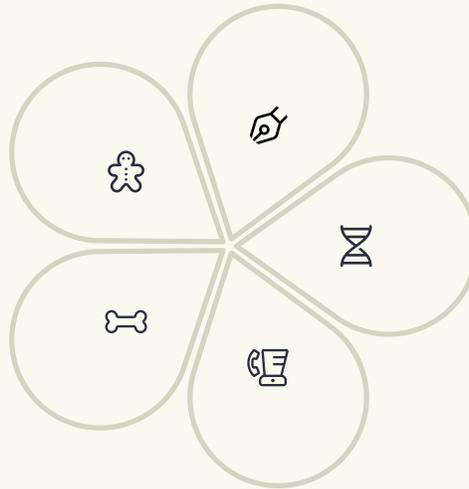
These liquids are often the easiest to tolerate, especially during periods of severe nausea or mouth pain. They are essential for maintaining hydration and can be a primary source of nutrition when solid food is not an option.

Calming Ginger-Mint Tea

Classic anti-nausea combination

Simple Bone Broth

Mineral-rich and deeply
nourishing



Homemade Electrolyte Drink

Natural hydration and mineral
replacement

High-Protein Vanilla Shake

Calorie-dense nutrition in
liquid form

Creamy Smoothies

Nutrient-rich and easy to
swallow

Recipe: Calming Ginger-Mint Tea



✔ Ginger is well-documented for its anti-nausea properties, while mint can help relax gastric muscles. This tea can be served warm for comfort or chilled for refreshment.

Ingredients (Yield: 2 cups)

- 2-inch piece fresh ginger, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1 handful fresh mint leaves (or 1 mint tea bag)
- 2 cups water
- 1 tsp honey (optional)
- 1 slice lemon (optional, avoid if mouth is sore)

Instructions

1. In a small saucepan, bring water and sliced ginger to a simmer
2. Reduce heat, cover, and steep for 10-15 minutes
3. Remove from heat, add mint leaves, steep 5 more minutes
4. Strain into a mug, add honey and lemon if using

Recipe: Homemade Electrolyte Drink

Natural Hydration Solution

A simple, natural alternative to commercial sports drinks that replenishes fluids and minerals lost through vomiting or diarrhea.

Ingredients (Yield: 4 cups)

- 2 cups water
- 1 cup coconut water (unsweetened)
- 1 cup non-acidic fruit juice (pear, white grape, or apple)
- 1/8 tsp salt

Instructions

1. Combine all ingredients in a pitcher or large jar
2. Stir well until salt is dissolved
3. Chill thoroughly before serving



Nutritionist's Note: Coconut water is a natural source of potassium, and the small amount of salt provides sodium, helping the body rehydrate more effectively than water alone.

Recipe: High-Protein Vanilla Bean Shake



Ingredients (1 serving)

1

- 1 cup vanilla ice cream (premium, full-fat)
- 1/2 cup whole milk
- 1/4 cup skim milk powder (or 1 scoop protein powder)
- 1/4 tsp vanilla extract

Instructions

2

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender
2. Blend on high until completely smooth and creamy
3. Serve immediately

This shake is a powerhouse for preventing weight loss. Using ice cream and whole milk provides calories, while the added milk or protein powder boosts protein content without adding volume. It's cold and smooth, making it ideal for a sore mouth.

Recipe: Creamy Avocado & Banana Smoothie



Thick, Nutrient-Rich Smoothie

A creamy blend with healthy fats and potassium that's gentle on a sore throat.

Ingredients (1 serving, ~1.5 cups)

- 1/2 ripe avocado, pitted and peeled
- 1 small ripe banana, fresh or frozen
- 1/2 cup plain full-fat Greek yogurt
- 1/2 cup whole milk or unsweetened almond milk
- 1 tsp honey or maple syrup (optional)

Instructions

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender
2. Blend until very smooth
3. Add more milk if too thick

i Avocado provides calories and heart-healthy fats, while banana offers potassium that can be depleted by vomiting. The Greek yogurt adds significant protein in a creamy, non-acidic form.

Recipe: Mixed Berry & Mango Smoothie



Antioxidant-Rich Refreshment

A naturally cold and thick smoothie that can help numb a sore mouth while providing essential vitamins.

Ingredients (2 servings)

- 1 cup frozen mixed berries (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries)
- 1 cup frozen mango chunks
- 1 cup whole milk or unsweetened soy milk
- 1/2 cup plain yogurt

Instructions

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender
2. Blend until smooth
3. Pour into glasses and serve immediately

Berries are packed with antioxidants that support overall health. Using frozen fruit makes the smoothie naturally cold and thick, providing soothing relief for mouth sores.

Recipe: Soothing Milk & Rice Soup

A unique and comforting dish that is gentle enough for severe mouth sores and can also help manage diarrhea. This recipe combines the binding properties of rice and bananas with the soothing nature of milk.

01

Cook the Rice

Bring 1 cup long-grain white rice and 2 cups water to a boil. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 15 minutes until tender. Let cool slightly.

02

Prepare Bananas

In a separate bowl, mash 2 ripe bananas until completely smooth.

03

Combine and Serve

Stir the cooked rice, 2 1/4 cups milk, and 2 tbsp sugar (optional) into the mashed bananas. Serve at room temperature or slightly warm.

Yield: 4 servings

Recipe: Simple, Savory Bone Broth

Mineral-Rich Liquid Nutrition

A hydrating, easy-to-digest liquid that can be sipped throughout the day. Bone broth provides minerals like calcium and magnesium while being exceptionally gentle on the digestive system.

Ingredients (6-8 cups)

- 2 lbs chicken bones or beef marrow bones
- 1 onion, quartered
- 2 carrots, roughly chopped
- 2 celery stalks, roughly chopped
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/2 tsp salt
- Water to cover



Instructions

1. Place bones, vegetables, bay leaf, and salt in a large stockpot or slow cooker
2. Add cold water to cover ingredients by at least two inches
3. Bring to a boil, then reduce to very low simmer
4. Cover and cook for 6-8 hours (up to 24 for beef bones)
5. Skim foam that rises to surface
6. Strain through fine-mesh sieve, discard solids
7. Cool and refrigerate

Gentle Beginnings: Breakfasts & Porridges

These soft, starchy foods are ideal for starting the day, providing sustained energy in a form that is easy to chew and digest. They serve as a foundation for adding extra nutrition through fortification.

Fortified Creamy Oatmeal

Classic comfort food enhanced with extra protein and calories using double-strength milk

Savory Congee with Shredded Chicken

Traditional Asian comfort food that's hydrating, soothing, and easy to digest

Soft Scrambled Eggs with Cheese

Quick, high-protein meal with gentle texture that's perfect for sensitive mouths

Mashed Banana with Greek Yogurt

Simple, no-cook option rich in potassium and protein for low-energy days

Recipe: Fortified Creamy Oatmeal



Oatmeal is naturally soft and unlikely to irritate mouth sores. Cooking it with fortified milk instead of water dramatically increases its protein and calorie content.

Enhanced Nutrition Breakfast

Ingredients (1 serving)

- 1/2 cup rolled oats
- 1 cup "double-strength" milk (1 cup whole milk + 1/4 cup skim milk powder)
- Pinch of salt
- Toppings: 1 tbsp smooth peanut butter, 1 tsp brown sugar, or mashed banana

Instructions

1. Combine oats, fortified milk, and salt in a small saucepan
2. Bring to a simmer over medium heat
3. Reduce heat and cook, stirring occasionally, for 5-7 minutes until creamy
4. Cool to lukewarm temperature before adding desired toppings

Recipe: Savory Congee with Shredded Chicken

A traditional Asian comfort food that is hydrating, soothing, and easy to digest. Congee's high liquid content makes it incredibly easy to swallow, while the ginger provides anti-nausea benefits.

Combine Ingredients

Mix 1/2 cup long-grain white rice, 6 cups low-sodium chicken broth, 1 chicken breast (6 oz), and 1-inch piece sliced ginger in a large pot

Finish and Serve

Remove chicken breast, shred with two forks, and return to pot. Remove ginger slices before serving warm



1

2

3

Simmer Slowly

Bring to a boil, then reduce to low simmer. Cover and cook for about 1 hour, stirring occasionally, until rice breaks down and becomes creamy

Yield: 4 servings

Recipe: Soft Scrambled Eggs with Mild Cheese

Quick High-Protein Comfort

Eggs are an excellent source of high-quality protein. Cooking them slowly over low heat keeps them soft and moist, while cheese boosts both protein and calories.

Ingredients (1 serving)

- 2 large eggs
- 2 tbsp whole milk or cream
- 1 tbsp butter
- 2 tbsp grated mild cheddar or American cheese
- Pinch of salt



Instructions

1. Whisk together eggs, milk, and salt in a bowl
2. Melt butter in a non-stick skillet over low heat
3. Pour in egg mixture
4. Cook slowly, stirring gently and constantly with a spatula, until eggs are softly set but still moist
5. Stir in cheese until just melted
6. Serve immediately

Recipe: Mashed Banana with Greek Yogurt



Simple No-Cook Option

Perfect for days with very low energy. Bananas are a core part of the BRAT diet for nausea and digestive upset, while Greek yogurt provides substantial protein in a creamy, easy-to-swallow form.



Ingredients (1 serving)

- 1 ripe banana
- 1/2 cup plain, full-fat Greek yogurt
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon (optional)

Instructions

1. In a bowl, mash the banana with a fork until smooth
2. Gently fold in the Greek yogurt and cinnamon, if using

Perfect for: Low-energy days, gentle nutrition, potassium replacement

Recipe: Applesauce Quinoa Breakfast Bowl

Complete Protein Alternative

A nutrient-dense alternative to oatmeal that combines complete protein with gentle fruit. Quinoa provides all essential amino acids while applesauce offers easy-to-digest carbohydrates.

Ingredients (1 serving)

- 1 cup cooked quinoa
- 1/2 cup unsweetened applesauce
- 1/4 cup milk (dairy or non-dairy)
- Pinch of cinnamon

Instructions

1. In a bowl, combine warm cooked quinoa with applesauce, milk, and cinnamon
2. Stir until well combined and creamy



- ✔ Quinoa is a complete protein, providing all essential amino acids. When combined with soft, non-acidic applesauce, it creates a gentle yet highly nutritious meal suitable for both nausea and a sore mouth.

Nourishing Soups: Liquid Comfort

Soups are ideal for delivering hydration, nutrients, and calories in an easily digestible format. They can be blended smooth for severe mucositis or enjoyed with soft textures when tolerated.

Classic Chicken Noodle

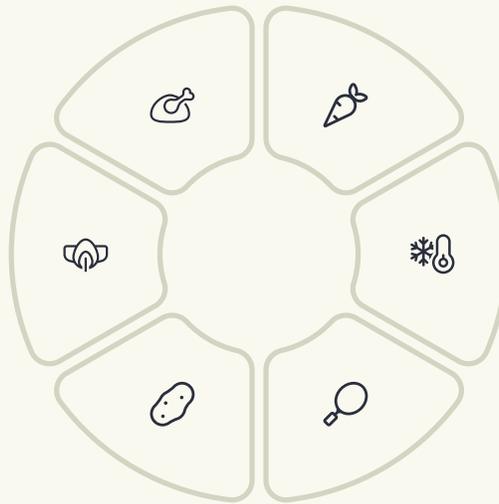
Quintessential comfort food with hydration, protein, and soft carbohydrates

Hearty Lentil (Puréed)

High-protein, plant-based option blended smooth

Simple Potato & Leek

Bland, starchy comfort that can be enriched for extra nutrition



Creamy Carrot & Ginger

Vibrant, smooth soup harnessing ginger's anti-nausea power

Chilled Cucumber & Avocado

Refreshing no-cook soup perfect when cooking smells are intolerable

Butternut Squash & Pear

Naturally sweet and creamy, non-acidic comfort

Recipe: Classic Chicken Noodle Soup

The quintessential comfort food providing hydration, protein, and soft carbohydrates. The warm broth is soothing for a sore throat, and the soft-cooked vegetables and noodles require minimal chewing.

Sauté Vegetables

Heat 1 tbsp olive oil in a large pot. Add 1 finely diced carrot and 1 finely diced celery stalk. Cook until softened, about 5 minutes.

Add Broth and Seasonings

Add 8 cups low-sodium chicken broth and 1/2 tsp dried thyme. Bring to a boil.

Cook Noodles

Add 1 1/2 cups soft egg noodles. Cook until very tender, about 10-12 minutes.

Finish with Chicken

Stir in 2 cups cooked, shredded chicken and heat through. Season with salt and pepper.

Yield: 6 servings

Recipe: Creamy Carrot & Ginger Soup



This soup is ideal for managing nausea due to the significant amount of ginger. Its puréed texture makes it very easy to swallow, and the cream adds welcome calories.

Anti-Nausea Powerhouse

Ingredients (4 servings)

- 1 tbsp butter or olive oil
- 1 lb carrots, peeled and chopped
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1 tbsp fresh grated ginger
- 4 cups vegetable or chicken broth
- 1/2 cup heavy cream or coconut milk
- Salt to taste

Instructions

1. Melt butter in pot, cook onion until soft
2. Add carrots and ginger, cook 5 minutes
3. Add broth, simmer 20-25 minutes until carrots are tender
4. Purée until smooth, stir in cream, reheat gently

Recipe: Chilled Cucumber & Avocado Soup



No-Cook Refreshment

Perfect for hot days or when cooking smells are intolerable. This cold soup is exceptionally soothing for both nausea and a sore mouth, while being surprisingly rich in calories and protein.

Ingredients (2 servings)

- 1 large English cucumber, peeled and chopped
- 1 ripe avocado, pitted and peeled
- 1 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 1/4 cup fresh mint or dill
- Juice of 1/2 lime (optional, avoid if mouth is sore)
- 1/2 cup cold water
- Salt to taste

Instructions

1. Combine all ingredients in a blender
2. Blend on high until silky smooth
3. Add more cold water if too thick
4. Chill for at least 30 minutes before serving

Recipe: Velvety Butternut Squash & Pear Soup

A naturally sweet and creamy soup that is non-acidic and comforting. The combination of squash and pear creates a smooth, velvety texture and gentle sweetness that can be very appealing when other flavors are off-putting.

01

Sauté Base

Heat 1 tbsp olive oil in a large pot. Add 1 chopped onion and cook until soft.

02

Add Main Ingredients

Add 1 medium cubed butternut squash, 2 peeled and cored pears, and 6 cups vegetable broth.

03

Simmer Until Tender

Bring to a boil, then simmer for 20-30 minutes until squash is very soft.

04

Purée and Season

Purée until smooth with an immersion blender. Stir in a pinch of nutmeg and season with salt.

Yield: 6 servings • Rich in vitamins A and C

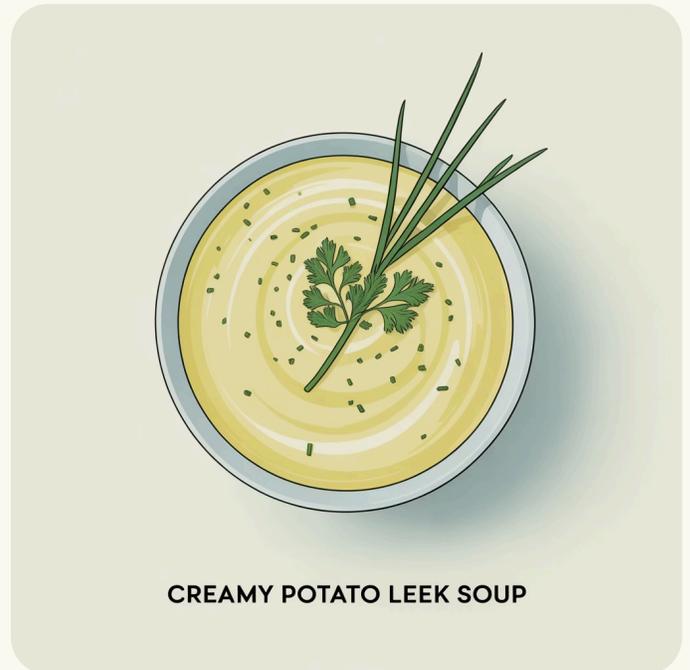
Recipe: Simple Potato & Leek Soup

Bland Comfort with Rich Potential

A bland, starchy, and deeply comforting soup that can be enriched for extra nutrition. Potatoes are a key starchy food for settling the stomach, and this soup is intentionally mild but can be made richer with cream.

Ingredients (4 servings)

- 2 tbsp butter
- 2 large leeks, white and light green parts only, cleaned and sliced
- 2 lbs potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 5 cups chicken or vegetable broth
- 1/2 cup heavy cream or full-fat sour cream
- Salt and white pepper to taste



CREAMY POTATO LEEK SOUP

Instructions

1. Melt butter in pot, add leeks and cook gently until very soft, about 10 minutes
2. Add potatoes and broth, bring to boil
3. Simmer for 20 minutes until potatoes are falling apart
4. Purée until smooth, stir in cream
5. Season with salt and white pepper

Recipe: Hearty Lentil Soup (Puréed)

A high-protein, plant-based option that provides excellent nutrition when blended smooth. Red lentils break down completely when cooked, making them ideal for a smooth, creamy soup that's easy to swallow.

Build the Base

Heat 1 tbsp olive oil in a pot. Add 1 chopped onion and 2 chopped carrots. Cook until soft.

1

2

Add Lentils and Liquid

Add 1 cup rinsed red lentils, 6 cups vegetable broth, and 1 tsp dried thyme.

Simmer and Purée

Bring to a boil, then simmer for 25-30 minutes until lentils are very soft. Purée until completely smooth and season with salt.

3

Yield: 6 servings • Excellent source of plant-based protein and fiber

Comforting Main Dishes

For days when appetite allows for a more substantial meal, these dishes focus on soft textures, moist preparations, and gentle flavors. Each recipe is designed to provide significant nutrition while being easy to chew and swallow.



Shepherd's Pie

Soft ground meat with smooth vegetable topping



Flaked Salmon

Tender fish with gentle dill cream sauce



Mac & Cheese

Enhanced with hidden butternut squash purée



Tender Meatballs

Exceptionally soft and moist in mild broth



Poached Chicken

Simple, clean protein with mashed sweet potatoes



Creamy Polenta

Soft corn-based porridge with Parmesan

Recipe: Shepherd's Pie with Mashed Cauliflower-Potato Topping



This dish provides protein and carbohydrates in a very soft, moist format. The gravy keeps the meat from being dry, and the mashed topping is easy to swallow.

Classic Comfort Enhanced

Ingredients (4-6 servings)

- 1 lb lean ground turkey or beef
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 cup low-sodium beef or chicken broth
- 1 tbsp flour or cornstarch
- 1 lb potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 1/2 head cauliflower, cut into florets
- 1/4 cup milk, 2 tbsp butter

Instructions

1. Cook onion in oil until soft, add meat and brown
2. Stir in flour, gradually add broth to make gravy
3. Pour into baking dish
4. Boil potatoes and cauliflower until tender, mash with milk and butter
5. Spread over meat, bake at 375°F for 20-25 minutes

Recipe: Flaked Salmon with Gentle Dill Cream Sauce

Omega-3 Rich Comfort

Fish is a soft protein that's easy to break apart. The creamy sauce adds moisture and calories, making it easier to eat for someone with a sore or dry mouth.

Ingredients (2 servings)

- 2 (6-oz) salmon fillets, skinless
- 1/2 cup heavy cream or full-fat sour cream
- 1 tbsp fresh dill, chopped
- 1 tsp lemon juice (optional, avoid if mouth is sore)
- Salt and white pepper

Instructions

1. Poach or bake salmon until it flakes easily with a fork
2. Gently warm cream in a small saucepan
3. Stir in dill, lemon juice (if using), salt, and pepper
4. Do not boil the sauce
5. Flake cooked salmon into bite-sized pieces
6. Pour warm sauce over flaked salmon

Recipe: Macaroni & Cheese with Hidden Butternut Squash

A beloved comfort food made more nutritious and moist with the addition of vegetable purée. The squash adds moisture, vitamins, and natural creaminess while maintaining the familiar cheese flavor.



Make the Roux

Melt 2 tbsp butter in a saucepan. Whisk in 2 tbsp flour and cook for 1 minute.

Create Cheese Sauce

Gradually whisk in 1 1/2 cups whole milk until smooth. Cook, stirring, until thickened. Stir in 1 1/2 cups grated mild cheddar until melted.



Add Hidden Nutrition

Stir in 1 cup puréed cooked butternut squash and salt to taste.

Combine with Pasta

Fold in 8 oz elbow macaroni, cooked very soft.

Yield: 4 servings • Great way to add vegetables for picky eaters

Recipe: Tender Meatballs in Mild Broth

Exceptionally Soft and Moist

Meatballs made with a panade (bread and milk paste) are incredibly tender. Simmering them directly in broth keeps them moist and easy to eat, avoiding the dry exterior that can result from baking or frying.

Ingredients (4 servings)

- 1 lb ground chicken or turkey
- 1/2 cup plain breadcrumbs
- 1/4 cup whole milk
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 4 cups low-sodium chicken broth



Instructions

1. Soak breadcrumbs in milk for 5 minutes
2. Add ground meat, egg, Parmesan, and salt
3. Mix gently until just combined
4. Form into small, 1-inch meatballs
5. Bring chicken broth to gentle simmer
6. Drop meatballs into broth
7. Simmer 15-20 minutes until cooked through
8. Serve with some of the cooking broth

Simple Snacks & Gentle Desserts

These small bites are perfect for the "small, frequent meals" strategy and can satisfy a sweet tooth without being overwhelming. Each option is designed to be easy to eat while providing meaningful nutrition.

Homemade Cinnamon Applesauce

Core BRAT diet component that's easy to digest and soothing

Cottage Cheese with Canned Peaches

High-protein snack with soft, sweet fruit

Vanilla Bean Pudding

Creamy, smooth dessert that can be fortified for extra nutrition

Avocado Chocolate Mousse

Rich dessert using healthy fats instead of dairy cream

Golden Milk Popsicles

Anti-inflammatory frozen treat for mouth sores

Creating Your Supportive Kitchen Environment

Beyond the recipes themselves, creating a supportive environment can make a significant difference in navigating the challenges of eating during chemotherapy. A well-prepared kitchen removes stress and ensures gentle nutrition is always within reach.



Your Path Forward with Nutrition

Empowering Your Journey

Navigating the nutritional landscape during cancer treatment is a critical part of the treatment journey. The principles and recipes in this guide provide a clear, supportive, and empowering path forward.

The core strategies are simple yet effective: eat small and often, choose foods that are soft and moist, fortify meals with extra calories and protein whenever possible, and prioritize hydration.

This journey is intensely personal, and nutritional needs can change from one day to the next. The most important advice is to be kind to yourself, listen to your body's cues, and remain flexible.



Some days, a simple cup of broth may be a victory. On other days, a more substantial meal might be possible. By combining expert guidance with these practical strategies, nutrition can become a powerful ally in supporting health, strength, and well-being throughout cancer treatment and beyond.

- i** This guide is intended to be used in partnership with your professional healthcare team. Maintain open communication with your doctor, oncology nurses, and especially a registered dietitian for personalized advice.

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