



Cancer patients have different needs in their nutrition and diet

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The quality of life of a patient diagnosed with cancer can be highly disrupted in different parts of their body, especially the physical component. This component must be cared for on a day-to-day basis to meet the needs that the body may begin to experience once clinical treatment for the disease or a new intervention for the patient begins. We recognize that clinical treatments can cause multiple side effects on the patient's body. Side effects may be different in each patient, which is why it is recommended that they be monitored closely so that action can be taken immediately. Some of the most common effects in patients are: fatigue, diarrhea, irritated mouth, ulcerated mouth, change in taste, vomiting and loss of weight or appetite, among others.

Nutrition and the correct intake of some foods and liquids can help overcome the side effects of the treatments or interventions that a patient receives. Sometimes it can become a challenge, but with the help of a nutritionist or dietitian, the process can be more bearable. It should be noted that not all patients will respond in the same way to the recommendations associated with their diet. If these scenarios occur, it is important for the patient or caregiver to make a list of what is working for the patient and to consult with the dietitian or nutritionist so that they can prepare an individualized plan. These plans are of great assistance, since they are made taking into account what the patient tolerates best and helps them feel good. In this phase of the course, it's crucial to not only guide patients on what to do but also to ensure their comfort and safety by clearly outlining what is not recommended. For instance, it is advisable to avoid consuming seafood or raw fish, uncooked nuts, dining in restaurants, fast food, as well as foods left at room temperature for over an hour and a half. Additionally, it is wise to steer clear of highly seasoned dishes.

Here are some recommendations for addressing issues related to insufficient food intake:

- Consider increasing protein and calorie intake, especially for cancer patients, by incorporating foods like cheese, milk, or eggs into their diet. These items can provide essential energy throughout the course of their illness.
- Opt for low-fiber foods to support the gastrointestinal system.
- Choose liquids that offer a variety of nutrients and calories, such as clear fat-free broth, water, fruit juice, apple juice, gelatin, smoothies, or ice cream.
- Incorporate small snacks into the day, in addition to regular meals.
- If hunger is lacking, consume small amounts of food and prioritize rest.
- If eating has been challenging during the day, consider having a snack before bedtime.

It's important to recognize that nutrition plays a crucial role in managing the patient's quality of life during their illness. Understanding how to adapt the diet in each phase of treatment should not be underestimated, as it significantly contributes to overall well-being.

