Eating Well after Transplant

Good nutrition is important to maintain your strength and well-being after transplant, even though your appetite may decrease. Here are a few ideas to help you get enough calories and protein, and to stay hydrated.

Calories in any form are a priority after transplant. Adding margarine, butter, or oil to foods can add calories without adding a lot of food volume. Eating frequent, small meals will help you keep up your caloric intake even when your appetite is low.

Protein

Protein is an important part of your diet. It helps your body recover from the stress it has been through. To get more protein, add powdered milk to hot cereal, eggs, soups, and casseroles. Chop eggs or grate cheese into soups, sauces, and casseroles.

Stay Hydrated

Fluid intake is particularly important in hot, dry weather or if you have diarrhea or a fever. A serving of vegetables is equal to 1/3 cup of water; a serving of fruit is equal to 1/2 cup of water. Liquids such as milk, soup, juice, and water, and semi-liquids such as Jell-O, ice cream, puddings, and yogurt all contribute to your fluid intake.

Most patients need at least 2 quarts (2 liters) of fluid daily. Ask your BMT provider how much you need to drink.

When Eating Isn’t Fun: Practical Tips

Loss of Appetite

- Have your favorite foods prepared and stored in a convenient place so you can eat whenever you like.
- Eat at least a third of daily calories at breakfast. Appetite tends to be better in the morning and diminishes as the day goes on.
- Keep ready-to-eat snacks available that are high in calories and protein.
- Doing light exercise for five to ten minutes a half hour before eating can help stimulate appetite.
- Create a fun, pleasant atmosphere for eating.
- Make eating a social event.
- Enjoy luscious, high-calorie desserts.
- Add powdered milk to foods to get more protein.
- Work with your doctor, nurse, and dietitian to learn other ways to improve appetite.

Taste Changes

- Keep your mouth feeling fresh. Gently brush, floss, and rinse frequently.
- Drink water, club soda, or fruit juices.
- Try sucking on hard candies or chewing sugar-free gum. If metallic taste is a problem, prepare foods in nonmetal containers and use plastic utensils.
- Cold foods may taste better than hot foods.
- Use extra spices or garlic to help improve flavor.

Sore Mouth

- Report new mouth sores to your BMT provider.
- Clean your mouth often. Use an anesthetic mouth rinse before eating.
- Avoid acidic, spicy, or hot foods.
- Try eating popsicles or other frozen foods to help reduce pain.
- Choose soft foods that are easy to swallow.
- Moisten foods with liquid to soften them.

Nausea and Vomiting

- Try salty foods to help ease nausea.
- Avoid heavy, creamy, or fried foods.
- Try bland, low-fat foods.
- Loosen clothes, get fresh air, and sit upright for 30 minutes after eating.
- Try small, frequent meals rather than large meals.
- Avoid eating your favorite foods when you are likely to have nausea or vomiting. That way you won’t associate foods you like with feeling sick.
- Tell your BMT provider or dietitian if you have nausea and vomiting that doesn’t go away.

For more information or to make an appointment for nutrition counseling, contact the BMT Clinic or call the Robert B. and Linda B. Wiggins Wellness-Survivorship Center at 801-587-4585.