PRIMARY CARE 10 TOP TIPS

Nutrition for each stage of the cancer pathway: Advanced cancer/End of life

Understand and acknowledge the potentially differing expectations of patients, family and carers with regards to nutrition, which can have physical, social, cultural and emotional implications

Explain to patient and family/ carers that a decrease in appetite, eating and drinking is part of the natural process of dying. This may help to diminish pressures and anxieties

Discussion of weight loss and eating problems provides an important opportunity to discuss disease progression, dying and to revisit care plan

Goals should not be to reverse nutritional deficit but to manage symptoms and improve quality of life

Consider and treat symptoms that have an impact on nutritional status for example pain, dry mouth, nausea, gastrointestinal disturbances

Consider the need to review and relax dietetic restrictions for pre-existing conditions for example diabetes or high cholesterol

If a patient is struggling to eat:

- a. Discuss what foods may bring enjoyment to the patient
- **b.** Offer small portions
- c. Offer frequent meals or snacks
- d. Offer nourishing/milky drinks
- **e.** Avoid exposure to cooking smells
- f. Offer easier to chew soft foods that take less effort to eat

Consider the use of oral

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In patients thought to be dying and seen to be losing their ability to swallow, good oral hygiene remains paramount

On some occasions specialist input such as local hospices or palliative care teams may be appropriate

nutritional supplements which may improve quality of life and be seen as supportive by patients, family and carers





Give Macmillan Eating problems and cancer and The building up diet booklets as appropriate All patient information booklets are available to order free of charge at be macmillan.org.uk