

Changes in weight

Many people with cancer find there are times when they cannot eat as much as usual. Sometimes this leads to weight loss. It can be related to the cancer itself or to the side effects of different treatments. Some people do not feel hungry. Others find food makes them feel sick. Some types of cancer make your body use up more energy, even if you are not very active. So you may be eating well, but still lose weight.

Some people may gain weight instead. Some drugs can cause weight gain. Or you may feel tired because of the cancer or its treatment. This can make you less physically active, which may make you gain weight. Some people eat more if they are stressed or feel sad or worried about the cancer.

Tips for managing weight loss

- Make fortified milk by adding 2 to 4 tablespoons of dried milk powder to a pint (570ml) of full-fat milk and mixing it together. Keep it in the fridge and use it in drinks, on cereals and for cooking such as making soups or milk puddings.
- When you are shopping, choose full-fat foods instead of 'diet' or 'light' foods.
- Fry your foods in oil, ghee or butter.
- Use plenty of butter when making sandwiches. Add a dessert spoon of mayonnaise or salad cream to thick sandwich fillings such as tuna, chicken, egg or cheese.
- Add extra butter, margarine or oil to bread, potatoes, pasta and cooked vegetables. Add extra cheese to sauces and extra paneer to curries.
- Add cream, sour cream, plain yoghurt, mascarpone or crème fraiche to sauces, soups and meat dishes. Grate cheese on top or drizzle some olive oil on soups.
- Add whole or blended beans, lentils or peas to soups, curries and stews.
- Add evaporated milk, condensed milk or cream to desserts and hot drinks.
- Have cream or ice-cream with desserts, or custard made with fortified milk.
- Your specialist doctor, nurse or GP can refer you to a dietitian. They can recommend or prescribe manufactured food (nutritional) supplements, which can come in forms such as milkshakes and juices.

Tips for managing weight gain

- Knowing about the different types of food can help you make healthier choices and help you lose weight.
- Try to eat more fruit and vegetables, and less fat and sugar.
- Start the day with a healthy breakfast. This will help you cut out snacks and feel less hungry at lunchtime.
- Use a smaller dinner plate. Bigger plates need more food to fill them.
- Enjoy a healthy starter before your main meal, such as low-fat soup, melon or salad.
- Try to have a glass of water before meals.
- Eat slowly and avoid second helpings. It takes about 20 minutes for your stomach to tell your brain that you are full. Try to wait a while before deciding whether you want more.

Local resources:

Resource	Contact details

National resources:

Resource	Contact details
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> British Dietetic Association (BDA) 	<p>www.bda.uk.com</p> <p>Tel 0121 200 8080</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CORE 	<p>www.corecharity.org.uk</p> <p>Tel 020 7486 0341</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oesophageal Patients Association 	<p>www.opa.org.uk</p> <p>Tel 0121 704 9860</p>

Further information

www.macmillan.org.uk/information-and-support/coping/side-effects-and-symptoms/eating-problems

Our booklets and leaflets are available to order free on be.macmillan.org.uk

- **Eating problems and cancer**
- **Managing weight gain after cancer treatment**
- **Recipes for people affected by cancer**
- **The building-up diet**

More information and support

If you have more questions or would like to talk to someone, call the Macmillan Support Line free on **0808 808 00 00**, Monday to Friday, 9am to 8pm, or visit macmillan.org.uk

Deaf or hard of hearing? Call using NGT (Text Relay) on **18001 0808 808 00 00**, or use the NGT Lite app. Speak another language? Telephone interpreters are available. Please tell us, in English, the language you would like to use.

We produce information in a range of formats and languages. To order these, visit macmillan.org.uk/otherformats or call our support line.

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