



Nutrition Tips

For Caregivers

Helping someone with cancer is hard work. It's important for caregivers to look after their own health too. Eating healthy food and getting enough rest helps caregivers stay strong and have energy. **Caring for yourself is not selfish; it helps you keep going and be there for the person you support.** Good self-care can lift your mood and help you manage stress. When caregivers feel well, they can better support their loved ones.

Here are some tips to help you eat well and feel well.



Focus on Eating Simple, Nourishing Foods

Fruits and vegetables	Fresh, frozen, or canned (low-sodium or no-added-sugar when possible)
Whole grains	Oatmeal, brown rice, whole-grain bread or tortillas
Protein	Eggs, lean meats like chicken, fish, beans, lentils, peanut butter, yogurt
Healthy fats	Nuts, seeds, avocado, butter



Keep your energy up

When you eat carbohydrates like fruit or bread, pair it with a protein to help prevent energy crashes.

For example:

Apple + peanut butter
Crackers + cheese
Yogurt + fruit



If cooking feels overwhelming, aim for "assemble, not cook" meals like sandwiches, snack plates, and smoothies.



Stick to Your Food Budget Without Sacrificing Nutrition

Budget friendly staples: • Eggs, peanut butter, and canned fish for protein • Canned beans or lentils • Frozen vegetables and fruit (they last longer and cost less while still giving you good nutrition) • Rice, pasta, oats, potatoes	Smart shopping tips: • Buy store brands • Stock up on sale items you already use • Choose frozen produce to reduce waste • Repeat the same 2–3 meals during stressful weeks
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Don't skip breakfast

A small morning meal can help keep your energy and mood up for the rest of the day.



Keep a short "default grocery list" to save time and mental energy when shopping.



Use your phone camera to scan QR code to find more resources and information!



Get Enough Calories and Protein

Signs you may not be eating enough:



- Tiredness
- Headaches
- Feeling easily upset or can't stay focused

Keep high protein snacks nearby:

- Peanut butter with crackers or toast
- Cheese
- Hard-boiled eggs
- Nuts or trail mix
- Protein drinks or smoothies

Helpful habits:

- Eat small meals often if you don't feel very hungry.
- Schedule your meals or set timers to remind yourself to eat a meal or snack (often busy schedules can get in the way of eating well).



2-1-1

Michigan

Call 2-1-1 if you need assistance getting food



Drink Plenty of Fluids and Stay Safe

Stay hydrated:

- Drink water throughout the day
- Try unsweetened tea, low-sugar drinks, or sugar-free flavorings if plain water is unappealing

Food safety reminders:

- Wash hands before making food
- Cook meat, eggs, and fish thoroughly
- Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours



Accept Help and Use Available Support

Some options for food support:

- Food pantries or community meal programs
- Nutrition assistance programs like SNAP
Call the F.O.R. hotline at 1-888-544-8773 (Mon-Fri 8:30am-5:00pm) for help applying for food assistance.
- Meal trains organized by friends or family
Try www.mealtrain.com to create a free meal train page.
- Asking others to shop, cook, or drop off groceries



Plan for the week:

Do once a week (or when you have energy)

- ☐ Wash and cut fruit or vegetables
- ☐ Cook a batch of rice, pasta, or potatoes
- ☐ Make or buy 1-2 easy proteins (hardboiled eggs, chicken, beans)
- ☐ Stock freezer with soups or frozen meals

Ideas for managing busy days:

- ☐ Make healthy snacks easy to see and grab (ex. in your car or purse)
- ☐ Fill a large water bottle in the morning and take it with you
- ☐ Plan time to eat before long appointments or hospital visits