

EXPERT TIPS

“There’s really consistent evidence that for people who started exercising even before their cancer treatment started, they were much less likely to experience things like fatigue. They were much less likely to lose strength or mobility. They were less likely to suffer from anxiety or depression, and they had a better quality of life. Starting an exercise program as early as possible is something I recommend. There are also studies that show exercise can help treat fatigue once it’s developed and help people regain strength. It’s never too late!” - Jennifer Ligibel, MD

“During cancer treatment, particularly chemotherapy, make sure you have enough protein in your diet so you do not lose muscle mass. After cancer treatment, I recommend making sure your diet is balanced to keep your weight in a good range. Eating a healthy balanced diet is a long-term goal and not something that if you have one bad day that it’s going to have an impact on you or your cancer.” -Jennifer Ligibel, MD

“Healthy lifestyle seems to be linked to lower cancer risk and better outcomes for people who’ve had cancer. There’s evidence that shows that even people that maybe didn’t have the healthiest lifestyle before being diagnosed with cancer, if they make some changes, they may have better long-term outcomes.” -Jennifer Ligibel, MD

“In most studies, it was shown at least 90 minutes of aerobic exercise and a couple episodes of strength training each week were the minimal level of exercise where people really started to have benefit.” - Jennifer Ligibel, MD

“Most guidelines recommend people get their nutrients from food, because your body absorbs nutrition much better from food than it does from supplements. Work with an oncology nutrition specialist to make sure you’re getting the nutrients you need.” - Jennifer Ligibel, MD

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WHAT IS SUPPORTIVE OR INTEGRATIVE CARE?

- Supportive care refers to all of the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual support that your oncology team can do to help you feel better after a cancer diagnosis and treatment. This can include pain management, nutritional support, counseling, exercise, music therapy, acupuncture, meditation, etc.
- Talk to your oncology care team about what side effects you are experiencing to see what types of supportive care modalities can be most beneficial.

EXERCISE AND CANCER OUTCOMES

- People who exercise tend to have better cancer outcomes (lower risk of cancer returning and a higher likelihood of surviving their cancer).
- There’s evidence that shows that even people that didn’t have the healthiest lifestyle before being diagnosed with cancer, if they make some changes, they may have better long-term outcomes.
- People who exercise or who lose weight have favorable changes in their metabolic hormones, inflammation, and immune system, which researchers know is something that relates to cancer risk.
 - When exercising, patients’ metabolism, quality of life, and fatigue improves, and risk of cardiovascular disease potentially decreases.
- It’s safe for patients to exercise and to lose weight throughout their cancer journey.
- When exercising, there’s value to doing both cardiovascular exercise and strength training. As little as walking three times a week can have long-term benefits in terms of cardiorespiratory health and perhaps even cancer-related outcomes.
- Doing a few strength training (even bodyweight only) sessions a week is important for maintaining muscle mass.

GUIDELINES FOR SUPPLEMENTS

- Talk to your medical oncology provider about any supplements you want to take. There have been studies that show a lot of people don’t talk to their oncology team about the supplements they’re taking.
 - This is important to change, because they can impact the effectiveness of your cancer treatment, particularly if you are taking an oral medication.
- Be aware of the level of evidence and cost of supplements, since they are not regulated as medicines in the U.S.
- If a supplement sounds too good to be true, it most likely is.

RESOURCES

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient Empowerment Network • American Institute for Cancer Research • American Cancer Society <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ ACS Cares App ◦ Nutrition After Cancer Treatment • CancerCare • Cancer Support Community • Eatright.org | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leonard P. Zakim Center for Integrative Therapies and Healthy Living <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Zakim Center Nutrition Videos on YouTube ◦ Zakim Center Exercise Videos on YouTube • National Cancer Institute <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Nutrition in Cancer Care • Oncology Nutrition • Society for Integrative Oncology |
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