

# EXERCISE, DIET AND VITAMIN SUPPLEMENTS



Eating well and exercising can have a big effect on how you feel – not just physically, but mentally too.

## Eating well

It's especially important to eat a balanced diet when you're having treatment. The right food helps your body stay strong and fight off infections. It can also help keep your energy levels up.

This can be hard when treatment could affect your appetite in lots of ways. Nurses and hospital dietitians will have tips to make sure you're getting everything you need and can eat in a way that works for you. There are some great recipe books out there for while you're having treatment:

- The Royal Marsden Cancer Cookbook
- Macmillan's online booklet – Recipes for People Living with Cancer (give it a Google)
- Trekstock's Food and Cancer booklet – [trekstock.com/foodandcancer](http://trekstock.com/foodandcancer)
- Ryan Riley's Life Kitchen – [lifelife.co.uk](http://lifelife.co.uk)

Beware of diets that claim to 'cure' cancer – there's absolutely no scientific evidence that this is true.

Coping with weight changes can be difficult. If you're struggling with this, have a chat with someone and try to focus on getting the nutrition you need to help your body.

## Vitamins and supplements

If your eating habits have changed, you might not be getting all the nutrients your body needs. Taking vitamins or supplements can help replace these. Do speak to your doctor or dietitian before taking any, as they can be harmful in high doses or could react badly with your treatment.

Supplement drinks can be useful if you're not eating well or find it easier to have your food as a liquid. There are different types and flavours that you can have hot or cold. Ask your doctor or dietitian first – some drinks can be prescribed; you can get others in supermarkets and chemists.

- If you're losing too much weight, adding ice cream or yoghurt to your supplement drinks can help boost the number of calories you're getting.

## Exercise

Regular, gentle exercise is often encouraged throughout treatment, but it's important you speak to your care team first. They'll need to take into account how treatment's affected your hormones, flexibility, mobility and more. They can help you work out a plan that puts your health first.

- If it's ok for you to exercise, think about an activity you usually enjoy, or find something new if you can't manage your usual routine.
- Low on energy? Try something gentle like yoga or swimming if your care team says it's ok.
- Check out [movecharity.org](http://movecharity.org) and the RENEW programme at [trekstock.com](http://trekstock.com) for tips.

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