

Food is Sacred: Eating During Cancer

Food gives your body nutrition and energy. Your body needs nutrition to move, be strong, and do everything you need to do in a day.

When you are sick, your body needs extra nutrition.

Food is medicine

Food connects us to the earth, to our spirits, and to our health.

When you have cancer, getting enough to eat and drink each day is important.

The foods you enjoy can help nourish your body and spirit. This includes foods:

- from the land, air, or water
- available from markets, stores, and restaurants

Food is connection

Eating together or taking part in traditional gatherings where food is offered can be a way to connect with others while nourishing your body.

Traditional and country foods

Traditional and country foods are sacred. If you have access to and eat these foods, keep eating them.

It is okay if you don't eat or have access to traditional foods. Choose foods you enjoy and have access to.



Drinking enough fluids

Getting enough to drink each day can help you feel better.

Age (Years)	Helpful amounts of fluid to drink daily	
	Females	Males
2–3	4 cups (1 L)	
4–8	5 cups (1.2 L)	
9–13	6 cups (1.6 L)	7 cups (1.8 L)
14–18	7 cups (1.8 L)	10 cups (2.6 L)
18–64	9–12 cups (2.25–3 L)	
65+	6–8 cups (1.5–2 L)	

Fluid includes water and other liquids such as:

- bone broth
- coffee, tea
- fortified soy beverage
- juice
- milk, rehydrated skim milk powder
- soup, stock

You may need more or less than the recommended amount of fluid daily. Talk to your healthcare provider.

Eating well

Eat a variety of foods to get enough nutrition. This includes:

- fruits, berries, roots, and vegetables
- grains like wild rice
- foods with protein, like deer, moose, fish, and beans. See page 2 for more examples.


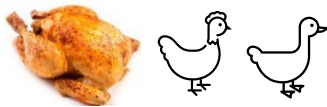
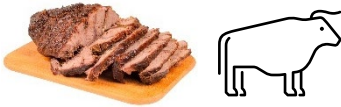





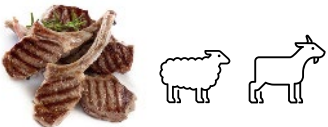
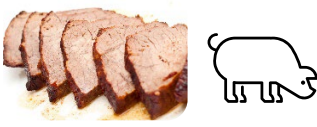


Eating regularly during the day can help you get enough energy and nutrition.



Eat foods higher in protein

Foods higher in protein help to keep your body strong. If you feel full quickly, eat these foods first.

These are examples of foods from different regions in Alberta. Some game animals may not be local to your region.

 <p>Beans, lentils, nuts, seeds</p>	 <p>Chicken, duck, goose, grouse/partridge, pheasant, turkey</p>	 <p>Cow (beef), wood and plain bison</p>	 <p>Dairy (cheese, cottage cheese, milk, yogurt)</p>
 <p>Deer, elk, moose</p>	 <p>Eggs</p>	 <p>Fish, fish eggs (roe)</p>	 <p>Jerky, pemmican</p>
 <p>Mountain goat, sheep</p>	 <p>Pig (pork), wild boar</p>	 <p>Rabbit or hare, beaver, squirrel</p>	 <p>Wild rice (pair with beans or lentils)</p>

Treatment side effects

Some side effects of cancer treatment can make eating uncomfortable or hard. These side effects may include:

- constipation
- diarrhea
- feeling full quickly
- nausea
- poor appetite
- vomiting
- weight loss or gain
- swallowing problems

Not everyone will have these side effects. If you have side effects, ask your healthcare team for help.

If you are in hospital

You and your loved ones can bring in food from home to support healing and recovery.

To learn more, visit ahs.ca/NutritionHandouts.

For more information

If you live on reserve and receive income support, you may qualify for extra money for food. For details on this benefit, contact your First Nation social director.

For more support

Dietitians in Alberta work with people on and off reserve, in a settlement, and in cities and towns.



- Call Health Link at 811 and ask to talk to a dietitian or complete a [self-referral form](https://ahs.ca/811) on ahs.ca/811.
- Visit ahs.ca/Nutrition.
- ahs.ca/CancerIndigenous.