

Nutrition During Chemotherapy

Questions to Ask at Your Next Appointment

Nutrition during chemotherapy is not one-size-fits-all. Your regimen, your side effects, your health history, and your preferences all shape what eating well looks like for you specifically. Bring this questionnaire to your appointments, take notes in the space provided, and do not leave without answers to the questions that matter most to you.

Part 1: Questions for Your Oncologist or Nurse Practitioner

These questions are best answered by the member of your oncology team who manages your treatment plan, because the answers depend on the specific drugs you are receiving.

About Your Regimen and Its Nutritional Impact

1. Does my chemotherapy regimen have specific food or supplement interactions I should know about? Are there foods that I need to avoid completely?

2. Will my treatment put me at risk for significant myelosuppression? If so, do I need to follow a neutropenic diet, and for what period of time?

3. Does my regimen include any agents that are particularly hard on the kidneys? How much fluid should I be drinking each day, and does that amount change on treatment days?

4. Are there any supplements I am currently taking such as vitamins, herbal products, or antioxidants that could interfere with how my chemotherapy works?

5. Is alcohol something I need to stop completely during treatment, or is an occasional small amount acceptable for my specific regimen?

6. I have heard that some patients need more protein during chemotherapy. Is that the case for me, and do you have a specific protein target in mind?

About Symptoms That Affect Eating

7. What antiemetics have you prescribed for me, and should I be taking them on a schedule or only when I feel nauseous?

8. If I experience a significant drop in appetite, taste changes, or mouth sores, at what point should I call the clinic? What would prompt a medication adjustment?

9. What percentage of weight loss would you want me to flag during treatment? Is there a threshold that would concern you clinically?

10. If I am having a week where I genuinely cannot eat very much, are there situations where appetite-stimulating medications would be appropriate for me?

Part 2: Questions for Your Registered Oncology Dietitian

If you have not yet been referred to a dietitian, ask your oncology team if one is available at your cancer center. These questions are best answered by someone who can review your full intake, your lab values, and your treatment plan together.

About Your Personal Nutritional Needs

11. Based on my current weight and my treatment regimen, how many calories and how many grams of protein do I need per day?

12. Do I have any lab values right now such as albumin, pre-albumin, or hemoglobin that suggest my nutritional status needs particular attention?

13. I have: _____. How do these conditions affect what I should be eating during treatment?

14. Are there foods or food groups I should prioritize or limit given my specific health history and the treatment I am receiving?

About Managing Eating Challenges

15. What should my meals look like on the days I receive chemotherapy? Is there anything I should eat before treatment, or avoid eating beforehand?

16. I am struggling with (circle what applies): nausea / taste changes / mouth sores / loss of appetite / early fullness / difficulty swallowing / constipation / diarrhea. Can you walk me through specific foods and strategies that help with this?

17. Are there oral nutritional supplement drinks you recommend? Are there ones you suggest I avoid?

18. For days when I genuinely cannot eat solid food, what are good liquid or soft options that will still give me adequate protein and calories?

19. I have noticed that _____ is not agreeing with me during treatment. Is there a nutritional equivalent I can substitute?

About Supplements and Products

20. Are there any vitamins, minerals, or other supplements that you would recommend during my treatment? Are there any you would specifically advise me against?

21. Are high-protein shakes and supplement drinks a reasonable option for me, or do you prefer I meet my protein needs through food?

22. I have seen products marketed specifically to cancer patients, things like _____. Are any of these worth using, and are any I should avoid? Do not use such products without consulting your oncology care team.

About Longer-Term Nutritional Planning

23. How often should I check in with you during treatment? Is there a point in the treatment course where nutritional needs typically change?

24. After I finish chemotherapy, should I expect my nutritional needs to change? What does nutrition look like during recovery and into survivorship?

25. Are there any resources, recipes, or meal planning tools you recommend specifically for patients going through treatment?

Before Your Appointment

Write your current symptoms and concerns before you arrive. Note how your appetite has been over the past week, any foods that have been difficult, any weight changes you have noticed, and every supplement or vitamin you are currently taking. You do not need to ask every question on this list; focus on what is most relevant to where you are in treatment right now.

My current symptoms:

Supplements and vitamins I am currently taking:

My most important question for this appointment:

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Based on the article: What Cancer Patients Should Eat During Chemotherapy Treatment

It is for educational purposes only and does not constitute individualized medical or nutritional advice. Always work with your oncology care team and a registered dietitian for guidance specific to your diagnosis, regimen, and health history.

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