

Healthy eating and active living - information for parents of children off-therapy

Following your child's therapy for cancer, he or she may develop health problems. These are called late effects. Some common late effects include heart disease, diabetes, kidney disease, osteoporosis (bone weakness) and problems maintaining a healthy weight.

To make sure your child lives the healthiest, most enjoyable life off-therapy, here are some suggestions to help you take care of your child's health today and in the future.



Healthy eating

Healthy eating may help prevent the onset of late effects. This includes:

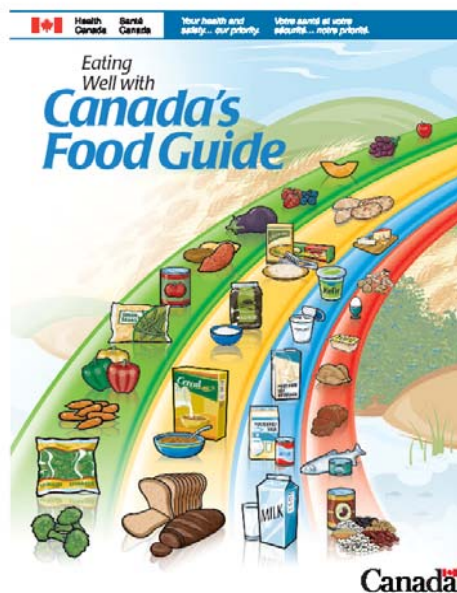
- preventing weight gain
- improving level of energy
- lowering blood pressure
- improving cholesterol levels

“Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide” is all about healthy eating. The guide puts foods into 4 food groups.

1. Vegetables and Fruit
2. Grain Products
3. Milk Products
4. Meats and Alternatives

It shows us how to eat a balanced diet that includes a variety of foods. A meal is balanced if it includes foods from at least 3 of the 4 food groups. Snacks are balanced if they have foods from 2 of the 4 food groups.

Go to this website to get a copy of “Eating Well with Canada’s Food Guide”
www.hc-sc.gc.ca



Steps to healthy eating

1. Choose your child's foods carefully:

Make your child's meals and snacks from the food groups in Canada's Food Guide.

- Include at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables a day. They could be fresh, frozen or canned in juice or water. Examples of a serving are:

- a handful of baby carrots
- a small salad with low fat dressing
- a small apple



- Choose whole wheat or multigrain breads, cereals, pasta or rice.
- Choose lower fat meats like chicken, turkey, fish and leaner cuts of beef and pork. Try tofu or legumes such as kidney beans, chick peas or lentils.
- Choose lower fat milk and dairy products such as skim or 1% milk, low fat or fat-free yogurts or low fat cheeses. Include 2 to 4 servings a day.

Examples of one serving are:

- 1 cup or 250 ml of milk
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup or 175 ml of yogurt
- 1 oz or 30 g of cheese

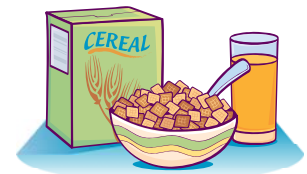


These foods are calcium rich and will help to keep your child's bones healthy. Milk and milk products are an excellent source of dietary calcium. A lack of calcium in the diet over time can lead to thin and fragile bones that break easily.

Talk to your dietitian, nurse or doctor if your child does not drink milk or milk products, or have questions about his/her calcium intake.

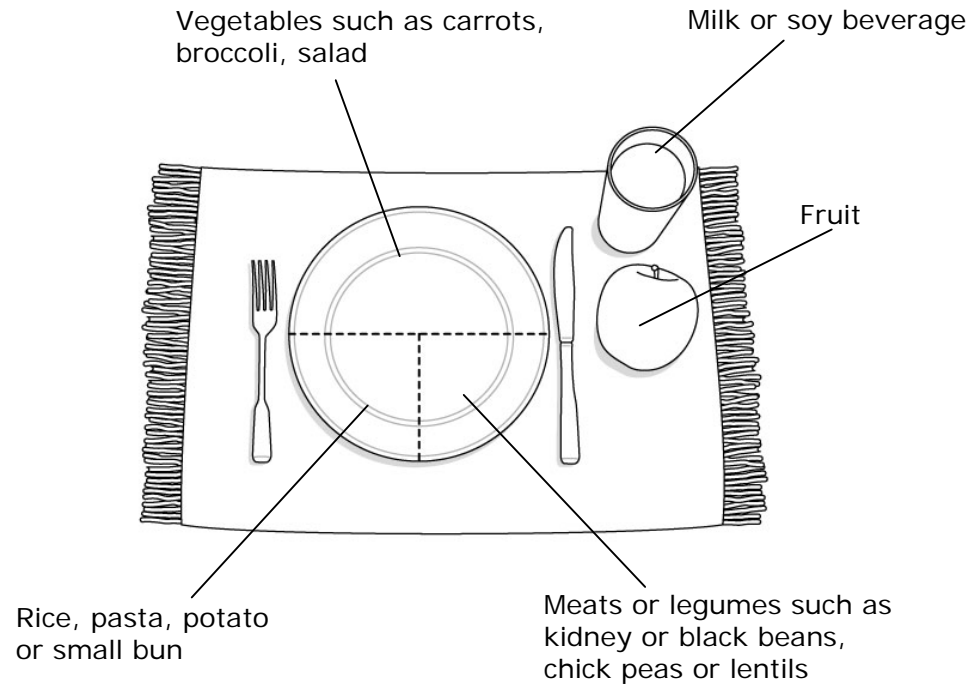
2. Don't skip meals:

- Eat 3 small meals and 1 or 2 snacks every day.
- Include breakfast every morning.



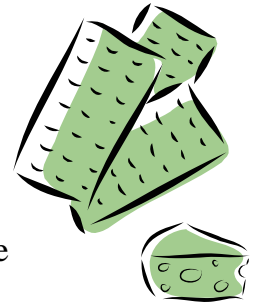
3. Know your portion sizes:

- Use Canada's Food Guide and this picture of a plate as your guide to food choices and portion sizes.



4. Eat between meals:

- Plan to include 2 or 3 snacks in between meals.
- Plan or prepare snacks ahead of time so that they are readily available in pre-portioned snacks. Examples include cut up fruits and vegetables, whole grain crackers and low fat cheese, low fat yogurt or a low fat granola bar.
- Make your snacks healthy by keeping them low in fat and include foods from 2 of the food groups in Canada's Food Guide.



For more meal and snack ideas, check out: www.chatelaine.com click on the "Food" tab and then click on the "Recipe" tab.

This website has some great recipes and cooking tips. However, the meal plans are not recommended for use as guide to weight loss.

5. Use healthy cooking methods:

- **Choose baked, broiled, steamed, roasted, poached or barbequed** rather than fried or smoked foods.
- **Limit the amount of added fats** such as butter, margarine and salad dressings to foods. If needed, use a small amount of vegetable or olive oil.

6. Be a role model

Show your child that you eat fruits and vegetables and other healthy foods. This will make it easier for your child to adopt these habits.

7. Limit beverages high in sugar

Drinks such as regular pop or fruit-flavoured drinks contain a lot of sugar. Serve water or low fat milk more often than high sugar drinks.

8. Limit how much fast and junk food your child eats.

The sugar and fat in fast and junk foods can increase your child's appetite.

Ways my child can eat healthier:



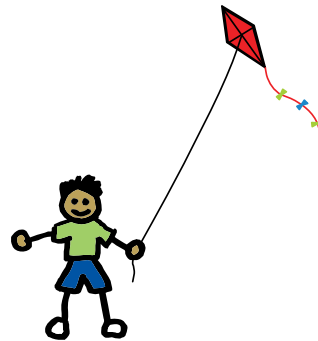
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Physical activity

Physical activity can be very important in helping to deal with some of the problems your child may face after his or her treatment for cancer.

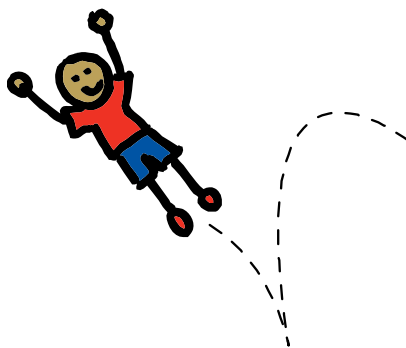
Regular and safe activity can help your child in these ways:

- prevent weight gain or help with weight loss
- keep muscles strong and flexible
- keep bones strong
- improve balance and co-ordination
- keep the heart and lungs healthy
- help your child feel less tired and have more energy
- improve your child's appetite
- help to relieve or manage pain
- help improve posture
- prevent constipation
- socialize with friends



Steps to being active:

- Do activities that are fun, interesting and motivating.
- Talk with your doctor about physical activity to make sure your child's heart and body are ready.
- Start slowly and gradually increase the length and intensity of the exercise.
- Aim to increase your child's activity gradually until he or she is moderately active for at least 90 minutes on most days of the week. Moderate activity is equal to taking a brisk walk. Activity can be spread throughout the day. For example, have your child take 3 – 20 minute walks and play 30 minutes of basketball during the day.
- Include activities that include strengthening, balance, coordination and flexibility. Try these activities:
 - going to physical education classes at school
 - joining a fitness club
 - going to camp
 - walking
 - swimming
 - climbing stairs
 - biking
 - yoga
 - martial arts such as karate
 - gardening
 - dancing
 - any activity you enjoy
- Limit the time your child spend on activities that are not physically active, such as watching TV, using the computer or playing video games.
- Have your child enjoy activities with a friend, family member or pet.
- Stop any exercises if your child feel any pain or is too tired at any time.



Ways my child can be more active:



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Where to go for more help and information

Contact:

- your family doctor or clinic
- a dietitian (go to www.dietitians.ca to find a dietitian near you)
- a physiotherapist

Helpful websites:

- Active Healthy Kids Canada: www.activehealthykids.com
- Association of Cancer Online Resources: www.acor.org
- Canada's National Institute of Cancer website: www.ncic.cancer.ca
- Canada's Physical Activity Guide (Health Canada):
www.healthcanada.ca/paguide/
- Children's Oncology Group: www.childrensoncologygroup.org
- Survivorship Guidelines: www.survivorshipguidelines.org
- The United States National Institute of Cancer website: www.cancer.gov