

CANCER

WHAT IS IT?

Cancer is the name given to a collection of diseases in which the body's cells divide without stopping and spread into surrounding tissues. This buildup of extra cells can form growths called tumors. There are over 100 types of cancer.

GENTLE NUTRITION SUGGESTIONS

Follow as you are able.

- Undergoing treatment for cancer can have a significant impact on the digestive system and appetite. The following are some suggestions for common symptoms experienced during cancer treatment:
- Poor appetite- some people find that smaller, more frequent meals and snacks are easier to tolerate.
- Nausea, vomiting, and/or changes in taste/smell- food and drink that are bland and do not have strong odors may be preferred. Serving foods cold rather than hot may increase their tolerability
- Diarrhea/ Constipation (see handouts for these issues)
- Sore throat or mouth- soft, moist foods with extra sauces may be better tolerated than hard or dry foods. Avoid alcohol, citrus fruits, vinegar, and spicy foods if they cause irritation or increased pain
- It is important to remember food safety when undergoing cancer treatment, as many treatments suppress the immune system and make it more difficult for the body to fight other infections. Discuss with your dietitian
- Many people may need a little extra protein during this time. Talk to your dietitian about ways to increase protein in your diet

OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is common for many difficult emotions to arise following a cancer diagnosis or during treatment. Some of the following may be helpful:
- Relaxation techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, spending time with animals or in nature
- Social support- connect with friends, family, support groups
- Counseling or talk therapy
- Engaging in a spiritual practice if you have one

*Do not engage in any of these suggestions if they are harmful to other aspects of your health.

REMEMBER

We are imperfect beings and each day is new and different. Some days it may be easier to follow the suggestions than others. Be gentle with yourself.

GOAL

Self-compassion and kindness towards your body.

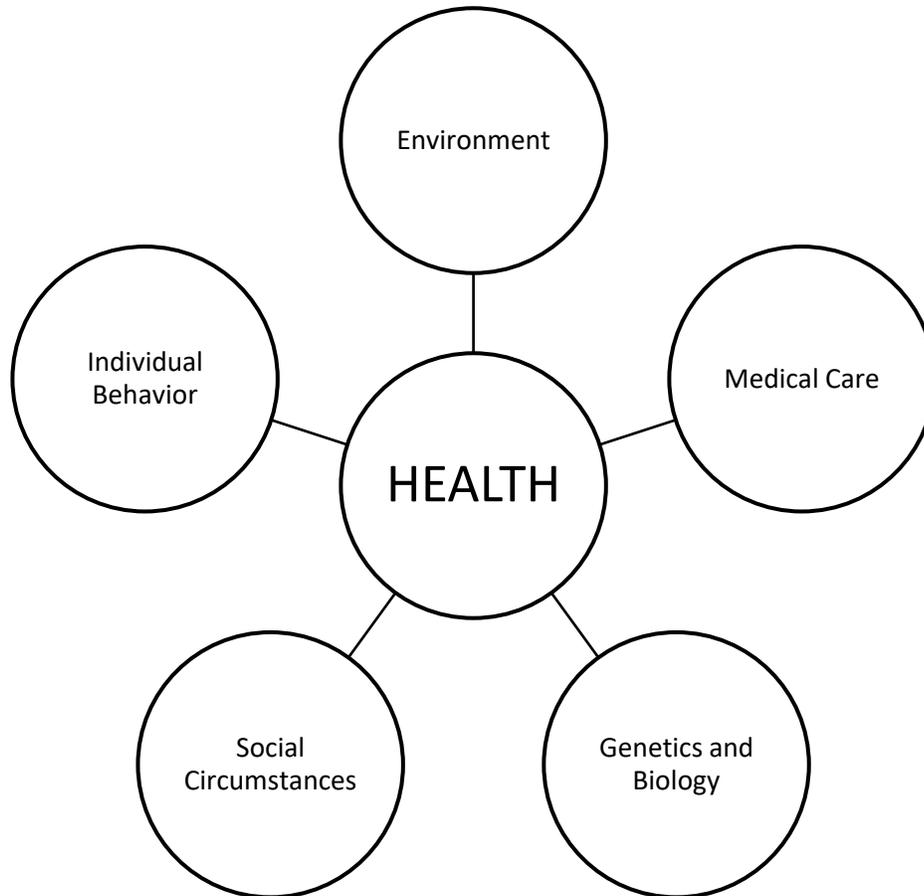
EVERY BODY IS DIFFERENT

There are a spectrum of symptoms and reactions. If any food or movement recommendations do not feel right for your body, trust that! It may be helpful to talk more about this with your dietitian.

TOTAL HEALTH

Health is complex and is influenced by many factors. Not all factors are within your control.

It is important to consider all these factors, not just individual behaviors, when exploring ways to address your health.



REMINDER:

This health condition is not your fault!

Discuss causes and risk factors with your doctor or registered dietitian if you are interested.

Image Description: A series of circles with Health labeled in the center circle. There are five additional circles surrounding the center circle each one connected to the center with a line. The surrounding circles are labeled: Environment, Medical Care, Genetics and Biology, Social Circumstances, and Individual Behavior.

REFERENCES

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DISCLAIMERS

Handout created by Emily Izer, Bastyr University Dietetic Intern and reviewed by Meghan Cichy, Registered Dietitian. Template design by Elisabeth Kelsey, Bastyr Dietetic Intern.

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