



PATIENT EDUCATION

Nutrition during radiation therapy

A plain-language guide for patients and families. Bring this to your visit. It does not replace advice from your clinician.

Why food matters in this season

Your body uses extra energy to heal. Weight loss that is too fast, or protein that is too low, makes fatigue and skin or mouth healing harder. You do not need a perfect diet. You need a workable one that fits your culture, budget, and other conditions (diabetes, kidney disease, swallowing limits).

What you may notice

- Clothes looser in two weeks without trying
- Meals left unfinished because of taste change, nausea, or a sore mouth
- Fear of “feeding the cancer” — a myth we can unpack; starvation does not treat cancer
- Family pushing large plates that feel impossible

A simple plate

Aim for a protein food at each meal (eggs, beans, dairy, fish, poultry, tofu, or a shake your clinic approves). Add a starch and a fruit or vegetable you can actually swallow. Snacks count. If vegetables taste metallic, try different textures or a squeeze of a flavor you still like — unless they worsen mucositis.

Where CureRays may fit. Ask for a dietitian when weight is sliding, you have a feeding tube, or diabetes and cancer care collide. Do not start a strict new diet, juice cleanse, or high-dose vitamin during treatment without asking — some interfere with care. Confirm supplements with your clinician.

What you can expect

- Weigh-ins at weekly visits are for trend, not judgment
- Shakes are a tool, not a failure
- Taste usually improves in the weeks after a course, though it can take longer after head-and-neck care



Practical tips

- **Batch.** Keep easy proteins ready (yogurt, cheese sticks, leftover chicken, hummus).
- **Sore mouth.** Cool or room-temperature food. Soft/liquid: shakes, soups, mashed potatoes, pasta, canned fruit, yogurt. Thin cereals. Blend produce. Moisten with broth, gravy, yogurt, or oil — not only butter.
- **Fluids.** Soups and shakes count toward both calories and hydration. A straw can bypass sores.
- **Avoid when the mouth is raw:** dry crunchy food, citrus and tomato, spicy or salty food, alcohol, and tobacco.

When to call the clinic

- You skip more than a day of food or cannot keep liquids down
- Unplanned weight loss that worries you or shows on our scale as a fast drop
- Choking, chest pain with swallow, or vomiting blood
- Blood sugar swings if you have diabetes and eating has changed

Questions to ask

- What is a safe weight-loss limit for me during this course?
- Which shakes or supplements fit my kidneys and blood sugar?
- Do I need a feeding-tube talk now?
- Who is the dietitian, and how do I reach them?

How to schedule or learn more

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