

Pancreatic Cancer and Nutrition: General Recommendations

Registered Dietitians (RD's)/Nutritionist are THE experts in food and nutrition who can motivate, counsel, and advise you on what, when, and how much to eat and drink-to achieve specific health-related goals and lead a healthy lifestyle. While these are general guidelines, make sure you meet with a Registered Dietitian/Nutritionist to address individualized needs.

Small, Frequent, High Calorie Meals



Finding the desire to eat can be challenging due to many reasons including altered taste sensation, nausea, fatigue, and general lack of appetite. The following suggestions may be helpful:

- Aim for 6-8 small meals throughout the day. Eat at scheduled times, even if you're not hungry. If you are hungry, take advantage of that meal.
- Keep nutritious snacks around that are easy to eat: variety of nuts, granola bars, fruit, etc.
- Try to include a protein source with all mini-meals. Examples include eggs, cheese, yogurt, chicken, fish, and legumes.
- Add savory spread to bread/ crackers to increase calories: hummus, avocado, creamy nut butters, yogurt dip, or tahini.
- Substitute a meal with a nutritional supplement drink or home made smoothie.
- Season your food with a variety of herbs and spices: lemon, mint, ginger, turmeric, basil, etc.

Pancreatic Enzymes

Pancreatic enzymes help your body breakdown fat, carbohydrate, and protein. Having an inadequate amount of enzymes is very common among people with pancreatic cancer. Common symptoms of pancreatic enzyme insufficiency include:

- Cramping after meals
- Large amounts of gas
- Foul smelling gas or stools
- Floating and/or greasy fatty stools
- Frequent, loose stools
- Light colored, yellow, or orange stools
- Unintentional weight loss

The dosing of pancreatic enzymes is based on your weight and amount of fat in your diet, and can vary based on your daily eating habits. Work with your physician and Registered Dietitian for individual pancreatic enzyme recommendations. Here are some general tips to obtain the best results:

- Take your enzymes with the first bite of all meals and snacks that contain fat.
- Take your enzymes whole; do not crush them! If you are unable to swallow pills, open the contents of the enzymes carefully and mix with apple sauce, mashed banana, or sweet potatoes.
- If you are eating a meal over a long period of time, take the enzymes throughout the meal.

Diarrhea

Some people still have diarrhea, despite taking the right amount of pancreatic enzymes. Generally, diarrhea is defined as four loose bowel movements in a 24 hour time. Some common causes of diarrhea, other than pancreatic enzyme insufficiency, include lactose intolerance, chemotherapy, and radiation therapy to the lower abdomen, dumping syndrome, and certain medications.

As always, reach out to a Registered Dietitian for individual questions or concerns.

High Calorie High Protein Smoothie Recipe

- 1 scoop of whey protein powder (substitutes: pea, brown rice, hemp protein powder)
- 1 cup of 2% milk (substitutes: lactaid, soy, almond, rice, coconut, hemp milk)
- ½ cup strawberries (substitutes: blueberries, raspberries, or banana)
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter (substitutes: almond, cashew, walnut butter)
- 1 teaspoon olive oil



Blend and enjoy!

Estimated nutritional content: 500 calories, 20 grams fat, 35 grams protein

High Calorie High Protein Trail Mix

- 1 ounce raw almonds, (~23 whole kernels)
- ¼ cup raw sunflower seeds
- ¼ cup raisins, unsweetened
- 2 pieces of chopped dark chocolate



Mix and enjoy!

Estimated nutritional content: 525 calories, 30 grams of fat, 15 grams protein.

Prepared by: Sabrina Toledano RD, CSO, CDN

NewYork-Presbyterian, Division of Digestive Diseases. 2.2017 for Pancreas Support Group.