

APRIL'S CHEMO DIET NOTES

All foods should be very low on flavor and aroma. Boring is good.

Cooking, if possible, should be done at another house and brought to the patient (or patient may prefer to sit outside during cooking).

Go easy on salt, pepper, "spicy" spices (such as Tabasco or chili powder). Garlic, celery, onion, and herbs may be used lightly as tolerated. Avoid acidic foods (such as tomato sauces for pasta).

Meals should be small and easily digestible.

Marinate meats in meat tenderizer or pineapple or papaya before cooking to help breakdown the proteins and make them more digestible to tender stomachs. Chicken, turkey, lean pork, or fish are preferred meats. Shred or chop meats into small pieces before serving.

Plain white rice, pasta, boiled/baked/mashed potato, rice cereal (like for babies), and grits are all easy on the stomach and make good side dishes (or main courses). Avoid whole grain foods. Soften crackers, dry cereals, or plain cookies in milk or soup.

No matter how thin a person is, don't force him/her to eat a lot of food. Small, frequent "meals" (even if only a couple of bites are taken) are preferred to 1 larger meal. Eating a single bite per hour may be an option for the super-thin or super-nauseous. A shot glass makes an excellent drinking cup, as the volume does not seem so mentally overwhelming, and it can be frequently refilled.

Fresh, canned, or frozen fruits are good snacks. Dried fruits must be cooked or stewed. Peel off any tough skins. Avoid seeds and uncooked dried fruits. Soft, non-acidic fruits are preferred (except when combined in recipes to help break down meats). Apple sauce (100% natural -- no added flavors or sugars) may be preferred to whole apples.

100% fruit juices can be substituted, if solid food is undesired.

Cooked or canned vegetables can be used. Mashed, boiled or baked potato (sweet or white). Avoid fried foods. Avoid seasonings as much as possible. Avoid raw vegetables as they are too hard to digest. Vegetable juice or "baby food" strained vegetables are an option for tender stomachs.

Yogurt is usually well-tolerated. You may prefer to buy unflavored yogurt and add the "flavor" yourself, as sometimes store brands are too sweet for nauseous patients.*

Milk with acidophilus added (such as "A-Plus" brand) is easier on the stomach. Chemotherapy often destroys the beneficial bacteria in the stomach which normally help you to digest milk products. Drinking milk without added acidophilus will give a bloated "sour stomach" and/or gas cramps.*

Water is the best liquid for drinking. Other options are 100% fruit juices, Gatorade, and "thin" teas (such as Chinese Green tea or herbal teas). Avoid caffeine. Add slices of fresh ginger to tea while it is steeping to decrease nausea.

Ensure® (or another nutritional drink) is a good "liquid diet" if nothing else can be kept down. Clear chicken, beef or vegetable broths (sipped very slowly) go down well too, when nothing else seems to. You can use Ensure® to make (nutritious) puddings, too.

Popsicles (especially if made with 100% fruit juices) are easy on the stomach and "numb the tongue" (which eases discomfort from some chemo treatments). "Ginger pops" can be made by boiling slices of fresh ginger in fruit juice for 2 minutes, then freezing into popsicles or ice cubes. Combats nausea as well as numbing mouth sores.

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(* = Patients on a Low Microbial Diet due to diminished immune systems should avoid these foods.)

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