Article Series Nutrition

6 tips to help with food prep

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When you’re living with cancer, getting the nutrition your body needs may support your strength and energy levels, improve tolerance of treatment side effects, and aid in your ability to heal and fight infection.

But preparing healthy meals can be a challenge if you’re suffering from cancer-related fatigue. Low energy, combined with other symptoms like changes in appetite, could make planning, prepping, and cooking healthy meals can seem daunting.

The good news is that there are tips and tricks to help make food prep a little easier. And whether you're an experienced cook or a beginner in the kitchen, a little advance planning can go a long way.

Here are some **Microsteps** that can make meal prepping easier for you. As always, consult with your care team for the guidance and recommendations that are best for you.

Finding your "go-to" staples.

Identifying a few regular staples can take the stress and waste out of meal planning. For example, you might buy a rotisserie chicken and pair it with roasted vegetables one night, chop up the leftovers for a salad or wrap the next day, and put any remaining chicken and vegetables into a quesadilla the day after.

Buy pre-cut fresh or frozen vegetables.

Buy bags of prepped vegetables like broccoli florets or peeled and cut butternut squash, so you can save time and energy on cutting and chopping. Prepared frozen vegetables are also a healthy alternative that will keep longer than fresh vegetables.

Cooking large batches or casseroles.

You can make one big batch of oatmeal for a week's worth of breakfast. Then you can add nuts, fresh fruit, or other favorite toppings when you eat it. Make a large casserole, baked ziti or lasagna and save it in individual portions in the fridge or freezer to heat and eat later.

Buying easy-to-prepare proteins

For proteins, consider chicken cutlets, cooked shrimp, or fish burgers, which can quickly be cooked on a pan or in the oven.

Using a slow cooker or pressure cooker.

These electric cookers do most of the work for you and are particularly great for soups and stews. They’re also useful for using up older vegetables that may have wilted a bit but are still good.

Ordering your groceries online.

Using a grocery delivery app or store website can save you the energy of a physical trip through the aisles. And many grocery stores offer delivery or curbside pickup. These services often come with additional costs, but may be worth it to avoid the stress of a shopping trip.

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