



Food and nutrition

When you have blood cancer, a healthy diet can help you cope better with your condition. It can also help you:

- Cope better with treatment, if you need it
- Keep active
- Reach or maintain a healthy weight
- Improve your long-term health

How blood cancer can affect your eating

It can be hard to eat well when you have blood cancer. You may have symptoms or side effects of treatment that affect your appetite.



You may feel too tired, unwell or emotionally upset to be interested in food shopping and meal prepping.

Some people gain weight. But often people lose weight without intending to. This can lead to underweight and other problems.

How to eat well with blood cancer



You don't have to follow a special diet when you have blood cancer - a healthy, balanced diet can help you be well-nourished, strong and healthy.

If you choose not to eat meat or animal products, you can eat a healthy and balanced vegan or vegetarian diet.

It's important to store, prepare and cook food carefully to lower your risk of food poisoning or food-borne infections. This is especially important if your immune system is low.



Your haematology team may offer you support if you are underweight, overweight or obese. They may refer you to a registered dietitian to help you reach a healthier weight.

Eating well before and during treatment

You may start to eat more healthily as part of preparation for treatment (prehabilitation).

Prehabilitation or 'prehab' means improving your general health and fitness, both physical and mental. Getting fit and healthy before treatment might:

- Improve your treatment outcomes
- Help you cope with side effects
- Recover well

While you're having treatment, you may need to avoid certain foods if they interact with your medicine. But you shouldn't have to exclude many foods.

How to eat well with blood cancer

Sometimes, your symptoms, side effects or late effects of treatment can make it harder to eat well. Fatigue can leave you too exhausted to care about food, while pain from a sore mouth can make it very hard to eat. Some people lose their appetite, or their sense of taste or smell.

Whatever challenges you have to eating well, we have **tips and FAQs to help you**. Visit leukaemiacare.org.uk and search for 'Food and nutrition' or scan the QR code.



Need support or information?

- Scan the QR code or visit leukaemiacare.org.uk
- Call our freephone helpline on **08088 010 444**
- Send a WhatsApp to **07500 068065**
- Email support@leukaemiacare.org.uk



This information is aimed at people in the UK. We do our best to make sure it is accurate and up to date but it should not replace advice or guidance from your health professional. If you have any feedback or you'd like a list of our sources, please email information@leukaemiacare.org.uk.

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