Contents
Is this booklet suitable for me? ..................................................1
What should I be eating?..........................................................2
The Eatwell Plate ........................................................................3
Base your meals on starchy foods............................................4
Eat lots of fruit and vegetables.................................................6
Limit consumption of red meat and avoid processed meats ........8
Limit consumption of high energy foods (foods high in saturated fat and/or sugar) .....................12
Include some dairy products daily .........................................16
Do not use supplements to protect against cancer ...........18
Sample menu plan – putting this advice into practice ..........21
Websites/agencies you may find helpful: .......................24

Christie website
For more information about The Christie and our services, please visit www.christie.nhs.uk or visit the cancer information centres at Withington, Oldham or Salford.

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Is this booklet suitable for me?
This booklet offers advice on eating healthily after you have finished and recovered from your cancer treatment. If you are unsure whether you are at this stage, please check with your doctor.

The aim of this booklet is to help you make simple changes to your diet which can help reduce the risks of a cancer returning or the development of a new cancer. Although there are no guarantees, there are some positive steps that you can take.

This booklet is aimed at people who are not underweight. If you are underweight, have experienced significant weight loss during your treatment, have swallowing difficulties or bowel problems or have had surgery affecting your digestive system, please speak to your doctor or dietitian.

Our other information booklets ‘Eating: Help Yourself’ or ‘Advice about soft and liquidised food’ may be more suitable for you if you are still going through or recovering from treatment and are concerned about a loss of appetite, eating difficulties or weight loss.
What should I be eating?
The dietary recommendations to help you eat well following your cancer treatment and recovery, include advice to:

1. Base your meals on starchy foods.
2. Eat lots of fruit and vegetables.
3. Limit consumption of red meat and avoid processed meats.
4. Limit consumption of high energy foods (foods high in saturated fat and/or sugar).
5. Limit consumption of salty foods.
6. Include some dairy products daily.
7. Don’t use supplements to protect against cancer.

Each section will explain more about the food groups, how much of them to include, why we should be eating these foods in the amounts advised and some tips to help you put this advice in to practice.
The Eatwell Plate

Use the eatwell plate to help you get the balance right. It shows how much of what you eat should come from each food group.

- **Fruit and vegetables**
- **Bread, rice, potatoes, pasta and other starchy food**
- **Meat, fish, eggs, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein**
- **Milk and dairy food**
- **Foods and drinks high in fat and/or sugar**
Base your meals on starchy foods

What are they?

- Bread, chapatti, cereals, rice, pasta, crackers, oatcakes, quinoa, cous-cous, noodles, potatoes.
- Try to choose wholegrain (brown/wholemeal) varieties where possible.

How much of these foods should we eat?

- These foods should make up about a third of all the food that we eat.

Why should we eat more of these?

- They are a good source of energy therefore, when eaten regularly can help reduce tiredness associated with cancer related fatigue.
They are filling therefore can help prevent snacking on high energy foods in between meals.

They are low in fat.

**Why wholegrain varieties?**

- Wholegrain foods contain more fibre and other nutrients than white starchy foods.
- They help you feel fuller for longer.
- They help keep your bowels working regularly.
- Try wholemeal bread, pitta and chapatti, wholewheat pasta, brown rice and wholegrain breakfast cereals.

**Top tips**

- Try to make sure you include one starchy wholegrain food with each of your meals.
- It can be as simple as a wholegrain breakfast cereal in the morning, a sandwich made with wholemeal bread at lunch and pasta, rice or potatoes with your evening meal.
- Limit the amount of fat you cook them in or serve them with to reduce the calorie content.
Eat lots of fruit and vegetables

**What does this group include?**

- It includes all fruit and vegetables; whether fresh, frozen, tinned, dried or juiced.

**How much of these foods should we eat?**

- Try to eat a minimum of five portions per day.

A portion of fruit or vegetables is approximately 80-100g (3-4oz) or roughly ‘a handful’.

**Some examples:**

- One medium sized piece of fruit (apple/orange/banana)
- Two small fruits (kiwi/satsuma/plums)
- Half a cupful of berry fruits (strawberries/raspberries/grapes)
- 1 slice of large fruit (melon/pineapple)
- 3 heaped tablespoons of cooked vegetables or fruit salad
• A desert bowl of salad
• 3 heaped tablespoons of beans or pulses (only counts once per day)
• 1 small glass (150ml) of pure fruit or vegetable juice (only counts once per day)
• 1 heaped tablespoon of dried fruit (raisins/apricots/dates)

**Why should we eat more of these?**

- These foods are low in calories and are higher in dietary fibre so can help you manage your weight and keep your bowels working regularly.
- They are also good sources of vitamins, minerals and phytochemicals which can help your body to defend itself against cancer and help support your immune system.

**Top tips**

- Aim to eat a variety of coloured fruit and vegetables.
- Include a 150ml glass of pure fruit juice at breakfast.
- Add a sliced banana / half a tin of apricots or a tablespoon of dried fruit to your breakfast cereal.
- Include a side salad at lunch.
- Have an apple or pear as an afternoon snack in place of a piece of cake, muffin or chocolate bar.
- Include a portion of peas or carrots with your evening meal.
- Have a handful of raw chopped carrot, celery sticks or cherry tomatoes in place of a bag of crisps.
- Include a smoothie or a portion of soup as part of your meal.
Limit consumption of red meat and avoid processed meats

What are red meats?

- Beef, lamb, pork, goat.

- These foods are excellent sources of iron in our diet therefore can be beneficial to include; however the recommendations are to limit the amount consumed.

- In cancer prevention, it is also recommended to avoid processed meats, which are meats preserved by smoking, curing, salting or the addition of chemical preservatives, such as ham, salami, bacon and sausages.
How much of these foods should we eat?

- For processed meats (ham, salami, bacon and sausages) the recommendations are to avoid these.

- For red meats, the recommendations are no more than 500g (18oz) cooked weight / 700g (25oz) raw weight per week of lean red meat.

- This is no more than approximately 3 average portions of red meat per week.

Some examples:

- Small portion of roast beef/lamb/pork/goat (100g/4oz)
- Pork or lamb chop (75g / 3oz)
- Quarter pounder beef burger (100g / 4oz)
- Medium steak (145g / 5oz)

Why should we restrict these foods?

- Consuming large amounts of red meat has been shown to be associated with an increased risk for certain types of cancers.
What foods can we replace these with?

- Animal foods such as fish, chicken and eggs are also good sources of protein and are not associated with an increased cancer risk; therefore can be included regularly.

- Non-animal foods such as beans, lentils and chickpeas; soya and soya products for example tofu, soya mince; mycoprotein such as Quorn and also nuts are all good sources of protein and can also be included regularly.

- Aim for 2 portions of protein rich foods daily. A portion is equal to 80-100g (3-4oz) of meat and 100-120g (4-5oz) of fish. This roughly equates to the size of the palm of your hand.
Some examples:

- A medium fillet of cod/haddock/plaice (120g / 5oz)
- An average salmon/fresh tuna steak (100g / 4oz)
- 1 small can of tuna (100g / 4oz)
- 1 small chicken breast or small portion of roast chicken (100g / 4oz)
- 2 average size eggs (100g / 4oz)
- $\frac{2}{3}$ of a can of cooked and drained kidney beans/chickpeas/lentils (180g / 6oz)
- Average portion of Tofu (100g / 4oz)
- Average portion of Quorn mince (100g / 4oz)

Top tips

- Try halving the amount of red meat you use in a recipe and replace with beans or pulses, for example in chilli con carne, curry or bolognase.

- Try to aim for two portions of fish per week, including one portion of oily fish (for example salmon, fresh tuna, sardines, mackerel, herring, pilchards). Fish is an excellent source of protein and contains many vitamins and minerals. Oily fish provides your body with omega-3 fatty acids which have other health benefits including helping your immunity, protecting against heart problems and improving memory.
Limit consumption of high energy foods (foods high in saturated fat and/or sugar)

What are high energy foods?

- Foods high in saturated fat include: fatty meats, sausages, pastries, hard cheese, butter, lard, cream, cakes and biscuits.

- Foods high in sugar include: full sugar fizzy drinks and cordials, sweets, chocolate, cakes, biscuits, desserts.

There are two main types of fat – saturated (animal fats) and unsaturated. Overall, aim to keep your intake of fat to a minimum. When including fats, aim for ones low in saturated fats because having too much saturated fat can increase the amount of cholesterol in the blood, which increases the risk of heart disease. In preference, use unsaturated fats such as sunflower oil, rapeseed oil or olive oil, nuts, seeds and oily fish.

How much of these foods should we eat?

Have a look at the label to see how much fat a food contains; generally this will be displayed in grams (g) per 100g of food.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fat (g Per 100g)</th>
<th>Saturated Fat (g Per 100g)</th>
<th>Sugar (g Per 100g)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Over 20g</td>
<td>Over 5g</td>
<td>Over 15g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Between 3g and 20g</td>
<td>Between 1.5g and 5g</td>
<td>Between 5g and 15g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Below 3g</td>
<td>Below 1.5g</td>
<td>Below 5g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why should we restrict these foods?

- Foods high in fat and/or sugar are high in energy (calories) therefore if consumed regularly can contribute to weight gain which, in turn, may increase your risk of certain cancers. They also do not satisfy your hunger unless consumed in very large amounts and do not provide you with the essential nutrients your body needs.

- The best way to manage your weight is to eat more foods that are lower in energy density, such as fruits, vegetables, pulses and wholegrain starchy foods as discussed earlier in this booklet.

Top tips

- Opt for lean cuts of meat and trim as much fat away as possible before cooking.

- Use a small amount of sunflower oil/olive oil or a reduced fat spread instead of butter, lard or ghee.

- Choose lower-fat dairy foods such as skimmed or semi-skimmed milk, low fat yoghurts, cottage cheese or low fat varieties of soft or hard cheese.

- Try sugar free drinks for example ‘no added sugar’ squash and ‘diet/lite’ fizzy drinks or simply water.

- Keep biscuits, cakes, chocolate and crisps as an occasional treat rather than a regular snack.
Limit consumption of salty foods

What is salt?

- Salt is used as a preservative and also to season food.

- It is hidden in many of the processed foods that we eat and approximately 75% of the salt in our diet comes from processed foods (for example bread, cereals, ready meals, snacks).

- Common high salt foods include: ready meals, tinned foods, cured/processed meats, sauces and snacks such as crisps/salted nuts.

How much of these foods should we eat?

Have a look at the label to see how much salt a food contains; generally this will be displayed in grams (g) per 100g of food.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salt (g per 100g)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>Over 1.5g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Between 0.3g and 1.5g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Below 0.3g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Try to limit foods which have a high salt content.

The government recommends that an adult should consume no more than 6g of salt per day.

If you have had surgery to the bowel, for example if you have an ileostomy, you may have been advised to include extra salt in your diet so please speak to your dietitian.

**Why should we limit these types of foods?**

- Eating too much salt can raise your blood pressure which can increase the risk of heart disease or stoke.
- Research also shows that salt and salt-cured foods can increase the risk of certain types of cancer.

**Top tips**

- Eat more home made meals as you have more control over the ingredients.
- If you add salt to food during cooking or at the table, try to reduce the amount you use aiming to cut it out all together.
- Try adding other flavours to your food instead of salt such as garlic, ginger, chilli, herbs and spices.
- Try making your own fresh chicken or vegetable stock instead of using stock cubes which are high in salt.
- Check food labels, especially of processed foods and try to choose the lower salt option.
Include some dairy products daily

What are they?
- Milk, yoghurt and cheese

How much of these foods should we eat?
- 3 portions per day for adults including pre menopausal women
- 4-5 portions per day for post menopausal women
- 3-4 portions per day for teenage girls
- 4-5 portions per day for teenage boys

A portion is:
- One third of a pint / 200ml of milk
- One standard pot yoghurt (150g / 6oz)
- 30g / 1oz cheddar cheese.
- Choose lower fat varieties where possible
Why should we include these foods?

- Dairy products are an excellent source of calcium, protein and other nutrients in our diet.
- Calcium is essential to help maintain healthy bones and reduce the risk of osteoporosis.
- It is therefore important to include dairy products as part of a healthy balanced diet.
- There is no scientific evidence to suggest that dairy products cause or affect cancer or that there is any benefit from following a dairy-free diet.

You don’t need to get all your calcium from dairy foods – the following foods are examples of non-dairy foods which contain calcium. You will notice that they need to be included in larger quantities to get the equivalent amount, however can be useful in meeting your daily requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calcium source</th>
<th>A portion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tinned sardines in tomato sauce</td>
<td>Half small tin (50g / 2oz)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinned salmon</td>
<td>Full small tin (200g / 7oz)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tofu</td>
<td>50g / 2oz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcium-enriched soya milk, rice milk, almond milk or oat milk</td>
<td>One third of a pint / 200ml</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White bread</td>
<td>3 slices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring greens/okra/kale/spinach, boiled</td>
<td>Large portion (130g / 5oz)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dried figs</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinned kidney beans</td>
<td>Full large tin (240g / 8oz drained weight)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Top tips

- Achieving your 3 portions of dairy foods per day can be as simple as: adding one third of a pint of milk to your breakfast cereal, having a 30g/1oz portion of cheddar cheese on a jacket potato for lunch and including a low fat yoghurt after your evening meal.

- Try to choose low fat dairy products where you can for example semi-skimmed/skimmed milk, low fat yoghurts, reduced fat cheeses or cottage cheese.

Do not use supplements to protect against cancer

What are these?

- These are any dietary supplements including vitamins, minerals, herbs, antioxidants or fatty acids. They come in a wide range of doses and different forms.

Why should we not take supplements to protect against cancer?

- Dietary supplements are not recommended for cancer prevention as they do not replace the natural benefits gained from real foods.

- Evidence has shown that high dose supplements can have unpredictable effects therefore are not safe to recommend.

- Some supplements have been found to interact with some chemotherapy regimens and as a consequence, may alter the effectiveness of the treatment.
There is strong evidence to show that eating a healthy diet, including a variety of foods as discussed in this booklet, is the best way to get enough vitamins and minerals.

In certain cases your doctor or other health professional may advise specific nutrient supplements for other health reasons. Please speak with your doctor, dietitian or specialist nurse.

This booklet focuses on dietary recommendations, but the following should also be part of a healthy lifestyle in cancer prevention:

**Keep to a healthy weight**

The aim following treatment is to be as near to a normal healthy weight as possible (see www.nhs.uk/Livewell/loseweight/Pages/BodyMassIndex.aspx for how to calculate your BMI).

If you have experienced weight gain, aim to reduce it gradually by following a healthy eating plan (see www.nhs.uk/LiveWell/Loseweight/Pages/Loseweighthome.aspx for more information).

If you have unintentionally lost weight or are underweight and are struggling to gain it back, see The Christie information booklet ‘Eating – Help Yourself’.

For any issues with weight, speak with your hospital doctor or GP for a referral to a registered dietitian.

**Be physically active**

Once you have recovered from you treatment and your specialist gives you the go ahead, start to build up your
activity levels. Try to be active every day and gradually build up the amount you do, eventually aiming for at least 30 minutes per day. This doesn’t mean you need to join a gym, you could just fit in as much walking as you can into your daily routine.

For more information, see The Christie information booklet ‘Be Active Stay Active – a guide for exercising during and after treatment for cancer’.

**Limit alcohol intake**

The Department of Health recommends that women should not regularly drink more than 2-3 units of alcohol a day and men should not regularly drink more than 3-4 units a day. Try to aim for at least 2 alcohol free days per week.

**Number of units in some popular drinks:**

- one pint of normal strength beer, lager or cider (3-4% abv) = 2.3 units
- 25ml measure of spirit (40% abv) = 1 unit
- medium (175ml) glass of wine (12% abv) = 2 units
For more information, see the NHS ‘Drink Smart’ booklet available from The Christie or visit [www.drinkaware.co.uk](http://www.drinkaware.co.uk) or [www.nhs.uk/LiveWell/Alcohol/Pages/Alcoholhome.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/LiveWell/Alcohol/Pages/Alcoholhome.aspx)

Sample menu plan – putting this advice into practice

This sample menu plan gives examples of what to eat at mealtimes to fit in with the dietary recommendations which have been discussed.

**Breakfast ideas**

- Wholegrain cereal topped with sliced banana and semi-skimmed milk
- 2 x slices of wholemeal toast with baked beans
- Bowl of porridge made with semi-skimmed milk and topped with a handful of dried fruit
- Fresh fruit salad topped with natural/low fat yoghurt plus 1 x slice wholemeal toast

  Include a small glass of fresh fruit juice with your breakfast to meet one of your 5 a day.

**Mid-day meal ideas**

- Multigrain bread roll/wholemeal pitta bread with filling, for example egg mayonnaise and lettuce or tuna and sweetcorn or chicken and salad
- Jacket potato topped with tuna and sweetcorn or cottage cheese served with a side salad
- Scrambled eggs on wholemeal toast topped with sliced tomatoes
Oat cakes topped with cottage cheese and sliced cucumber
Cooked rice/pasta/potatoes/cous cous made into a salad with tuna/chicken/pulses and your favourite low-calorie dressing
Homemade lentil soup with a wholemeal bread roll

Include a piece of fresh fruit or handful of dried fruit plus a low fat yoghurt/fromage frais/glass of milk with your lunch

Evening meal ideas
Pasta with sliced chicken breast in a tomato sauce
Vegetable and lentil curry with rice and chapatti
Chicken breast with potatoes, broccoli and carrots
Grilled fish fillet with cous-cous and mixed vegetables
Pasta with tuna, sweetcorn and chopped tomatoes
Chilli con carne made with half the amount of lean mince beef and extra kidney beans, served with rice or crusty bread
Vegetable and cashew nut or tofu stir fry served with noodles

Fancy a dessert? Try a healthier option
Low fat yoghurt topped with dried fruit
Fresh fruit salad
Tinned fruit topped with low fat yoghurt
Stewed fruit served with low fat custard
Low fat rice pudding topped with berries or stewed fruit
Feeling hungry? Try these snack ideas

- Portion of fresh fruit for example banana/apple/orange/smaller bunch grapes/2 plums
- Handful of dried fruit for example raisins/sultanas/apricots/dates
- Strips of carrot/celery/cucumber with low fat humous dip
- Plain rice cakes topped with low fat cream cheese
- Low fat yoghurt
- Slice of toast with a banana
- Small scone or slice of fruit loaf
- Small handful of unsalted nuts

Drink ideas

- Plain or sparkling water
- Plain milk (skimmed or semi-skimmed)
- Pure fruit juice (150ml)
- Low calorie/diet squash or fizzy drinks
- Tea, coffee or fruit tea

If you have any concerns or further questions about your diet please ask your doctor or specialist nurse to refer you to a registered dietitian for advice.
Websites/agencies you may find helpful:

World Cancer Research Fund
www.wrcf-uk.org

Cancer Research UK
www.cancerresearchuk.org

British Dietetic Association
www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/index.htm

We try to ensure that all our information given to patients is accurate, balanced and based on the most up-to-date scientific evidence.

If you would like to have details about the sources used please contact patient.information@christie.nhs.uk
Contact The Christie Hotline for urgent support and specialist advice

The Christie Hotline: 0161 446 3658
Open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Visit the Cancer Information Centre
The Christie at Withington 0161 446 8100
The Christie at Oldham 0161 918 7745
The Christie at Salford 0161 918 7804
Open Monday to Friday, 10am – 4pm.
Opening times can vary, please ring to check before making a special journey.

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