

The best foods to try during chemotherapy (According to a doctor)

OCT 20, 2026



Featured topic and speaker

Chemotherapy can affect appetite, taste, smell and energy levels, making mealtimes challenging for both patients and caregivers. In this video, Nate Wood, MD, MHS, shares practical tips for supporting a loved one through cancer treatment with comfort, compassion and realistic expectations.

Learn why eating can become difficult during chemotherapy, which gentle foods may be easier to tolerate, and how caregivers can offer support without adding pressure. Dr. Wood also discusses the importance of working with your physician, oncologist and dietitian to find personalized solutions during treatment.

Remember: every person's experience with chemotherapy is different. Always follow the recommendations of your health care team regarding nutrition and treatment.

Find out what doctors want patients to know about [cancer screening and prevention](#).

- For more expert-backed fitness, health and wellness content, [subscribe to our channel](#).
- Get the latest health news, trending topics, and public health information [delivered to your inbox every week](#).
- Follow [#AMA](#) on [social media](#).

Speaker

- **Nate Wood, MD, MHS**, obesity medicine physician, internal medicine; director, culinary medicine, Yale University School of Medicine

Transcript

Dr. Wood: When you're supporting a loved one who's going through chemo, mealtime can go from feeling like something that's comforting, a time of connection, to something that's really hard and frustrating. It's not about perfection. Even small bites here can be wins. It's really about finding foods that your loved one can come back to, tolerate and enjoy time and time again.

Between the mouth sores, decreases in appetite, nausea, certainly, or perhaps changes in taste and smell, that can make some foods suddenly really off-putting. And that's not to mention the fatigue, which sometimes can be so overwhelming that it can feel really hard to even get up to share a meal together.

This is the perfect time to engage your physician, your oncologist, and your dietitian—your multidisciplinary team—to help you find some personalized solutions that are really going to work for your loved one. But when I think about foods that they might be able to enjoy and tolerate, think about soft foods. I think about gentle foods, things that don't have really strong flavors or smells, things like oatmeal, yogurt, bananas, scrambled eggs, and soup, of course, is an all-time favorite.

It's about offering choices without pressure. And really, potentially, the best thing that we can ask is, what feels possible today? And then bringing them that food as a show of support, of comfort, of connection and of nourishment.

Disclaimer: This video is for educational purposes only and is not medical advice. If you have questions about your health and diet, please consult your doctor.