

TIPS FOR TREATING CANCER SIDE-EFFECTS

The following tips for treating side effects may be helpful if your child experiences difficulty during therapy:

Nausea and vomiting:

- Offer plain, bland foods, such as cereal, canned or fresh fruit, rice, pasta, toast, mashed or baked potatoes, soup, crackers, or plain meat. Avoid spicy, heavy or fatty foods.
- If food smells bother your child, use cold or room temperature foods. Use a cup with a lid. Encourage the child to avoid areas where food is cooking.
- Don't offer solid food and liquids at the same time, as this can induce nausea by making the child feel too full. Have your child eat solid foods for meals and snacks, and give liquids 30 to 60 minutes before or after eating.

Diarrhoea:

- Offer plenty of liquids.
- Try the BRATT (bananas, rice, applesauce, toast and tea) diet. Other foods on this diet include pasta, crackers, and mashed potatoes. Use this diet for two to three days at most, since it is too low in certain nutrients.
- Serve several small meals throughout the day, and avoid serving heavy, fatty foods or anything with caffeine.
- Cut back on fibre in the diet. Use canned fruits, mild cooked vegetables (like carrots, green beans, squash and potatoes) and cereals and breads made with refined flour rather than whole-grain or bran-containing products.

Constipation:

- Provide extra fluids.
- Offer beverages that have caffeine, like coffee, tea, and cola.
- Increase the fibre in the diet by serving plenty of fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- Encourage your child to increase his activity level.

Poor Appetite:

- Offer small amounts of food fore or more times a day.
- Offer liquids between meals.
- Make every bit count by offering "power-packed" foods.
- Start with small portions and increase gradually.
- Try to obtain the foods and beverages that your child wants.

Sore mouth and throat:

- Offer soft foods like pudding, jelly, macaroni cheese, applesauce, bananas and ice cream.
- Avoid acidic foods like oranges and tomatoes, spicy foods or foods that require a lot of chewing.
- Encourage good oral hygiene.

Heartburn or reflux:

- Don't give your child high-fat, spicy foods, caffeine, citrus juices, cinnamon,

- peppermint or pepper.
- Keep your child upright for at least a hour after eating.

Difficulty chewing or swallowing:

- Give your child soft, moist foods and have her drink liquids while eating.
- Avoid hard foods that require a lot of chewing.
- Cut your child's foods into small pieces. Encourage your child to eat slowly and chew well.
- Use extra butter, sauces and gravies.

Belching, intestinal gas or cramps:

- Avoid gas-forming foods such as cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, cucumber, beans and carbonated drinks.
- Encourage your child to eat and drink slowly.
- Avoid letting your child chew gum.

Dry mouth:

- Offer moist foods, extra butter, gravy and sauces.
- Offer hard candy or gum.
- Have your child rinse his mouth often, and keep fluids available to sip on.

Excessive weight gain:

- Provide enough fruits and vegetables.
- Limit junk food to occasional small amounts.
- Cut back on fattening foods and offer low-fat or skim-milk dairy products. Take advantage of low-fat and fat-free products. Use lean meats. Avoid frying foods in any kind of grease. Instead, bake, grill, microwave or roast foods and use only minimal amounts of fat during cooking.
- Limits sweetened drinks to one serving each day, and substitute diet drinks or water for other servings.
- Limit portion sizes to those appropriate for the child's age. If the child wants a second helping, provide one extra serving of a low-fat fruit or vegetable. If the child is still hungry, offer foods like raw vegetables, sugar-free jelly or gum.
- Encourage an increased activity level.
- When eating out, allow just one high-calorie food.
- Support the child by changing the eating habits of the family. The child cannot be expected to eat low-fat foods if the rest of the family is eating cheese-burgers, fries and milk-shakes. Set a good example.

If at any point during the treatment you become concerned about your child's nutrition, please discuss this with your doctor.