

What You Want to Know About Nutrition and Bladder Cancer



Part III | Dietary Recommendations for Bladder Cancer Treatments

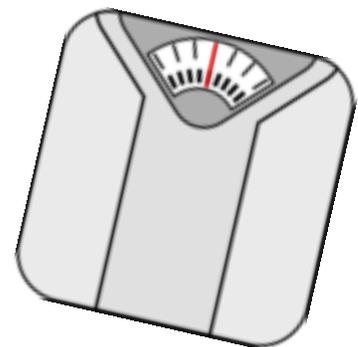
Presented by

Jill M. Hamilton-Reeves, PhD, RD, CSO is an associate professor, dietitian, and certified oncology nutritionist at the University of Kansas. Dr. Hamilton-Reeves works with urologists and medical oncologist to foster the discovery of better diet and exercise approaches to benefit patients with cancer. Her nationally-funded research program is focused on nutrition and cancer prevention, management, and survivorship, with specific attention on bladder cancer. The intent of Dr. Hamilton-Reeves work is to toss aside the fear and anxiety around food and to help patients decipher evidence-based or science-driven approaches to thrive. She hopes that you will eat and discover the great taste of wholesome foods.

This next section is really going to be a brief overview of *things that you can do along the way to help make your cancer treatment more comfortable.*

Balanced, healthy diets are recommended for all staging of bladder cancer treatment but there are some certain nutrition considerations that may be made for specific treatment. It's really important to eat adequately to maintain your weight.

Be sure to tell your healthcare team if you are unintentionally losing weight. It's one thing to kind of go and try to lose weight versus unintentionally losing weight which, is a signal to us that things may not be going well and there's some things that we can do to help.







Nutrition by treatment

- Cystectomy:
 - Eat sufficient protein and calories to maintain weight before and after surgery. Weight loss during this time is not advised
 - Get up and walk after surgery as able. Commit to regular activity as tolerated during recovery
 - After surgery, start with liquids then soft foods. Avoid the high-sugar drinks because these can contribute to diarrhea.
- BCG/Chemotherapy:
 - Follow a general healthy diet.
 - Commit to regular activity as tolerated during recovery.



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The first treatment that I was going to talk about is **cystectomy**. Before cystectomy, it's really important to eat sufficient protein and calories to maintain weight and weight loss, especially around the time of this procedure, is not advised because the surgery itself often leads to weight loss anyway.

Get up and walk after surgery if you're able, commit to regular activity as tolerated during recovery. With many of our patients, even while patients are recovering in the hospital, we try to get them up and walking with physical therapy just around the

unit, maybe halfway around the unit, just start getting up and moving. Also, it's important after surgery to start using your gut as soon as possible. We try to feed our patients within 24 hours of their surgery. We start with liquids and soft foods, but we do avoid high sugary drinks because that can really contribute to diarrhea and GI symptoms after such a major surgery.

The next treatment is **BCG or chemotherapy**, which they're not in the same class by any means, but really the advice is to follow a general healthy diet, commit to regular activity as tolerated during recovery. Many of you, if the chemotherapy that you might be taking is platinum-based and to it can lead to some really off-flavors.

We will go into some of the specific recommendations for altered food tastes. I noted several of you had mentioned that sometime during your treatment you had a loss of appetite or weight loss and there are some strategies to deal with that as well.

Consuming smaller meals, including right before bed. One of the things that really important is to stay ahead of your eating schedule so if you let yourself get hungry that actually kind of makes things worse and makes it harder to eat. That bedtime snack really helps with covering you until the morning.





Alleviating side effects of treatment

- **Appetite/weight loss:**
 - Eat 5-6 smaller meals. Include a bedtime snack
 - Keep protein/fat containing snacks like peanut butter crackers, nuts, and granola bars near
 - Add more fats such as avocados/guacamole, nut butters, olive oil, and butter for more calories
 - Drink caloric drinks such as milk, soup, and protein drinks between meals. Avoid liquids during mealtime
 - Consult a dietitian if you are losing weight
- **Bloating:**
 - Eat 5-6 smaller meals
 - Consider eating cooked fruits and vegetables instead of raw
 - Sip on tea, broth, or warm water with lemon
 - Limit spicy, greasy, and high-fiber foods





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Try to keep protein and fat-containing snacks like peanut butter crackers, nuts, and granola bars near you. Adding fats such as avocados or guacamole, nut butters, olive oil, and butter really helps to get the more calories in. Drinking caloric drinks such as soup and protein drinks between meals can help. Avoiding liquids during mealtime cause that can stretch your stomach and you may not want to eat as much. I also want to mention that it's really *helpful to work with a dietitian if you are losing weight* because we have lots of strategies in our toolbox to help kind of brainstorm ways to work with your specific eating plan.

There were a couple questions that were submitted before asking about ways that they can avoid feeling bloated. Eating smaller meals a lot of times will help, 5-6 smaller meals, trying to eat more of your fruits and vegetables in the cooked form rather than the raw form. Also, sipping on warm beverages such as tea, broth, or warm water with lemon often helps kind of clear some gas through the system. Then, avoid spicy, greasy, and really high-fiber foods. Fiber is typically kind of healthy for you but if you're having bloating symptoms you would want to increase fiber in small increments and not just a huge blast of a bunch of fiber.

Change of taste or smell. I get this a lot from our bladder patients, especially those that are on chemotherapy or have undergone cystectomy. A lot of times there's kind of a metallic taste in the mouth, or at least that's what many of our patients have complained about.

Alleviating side effects of treatment

- **Change of taste or smell:**
 - Choose foods that look and smell good
 - Marinate foods
 - Try tart foods and drinks
 - Make foods sweeter
 - Add flavor
 - Eat with plastic utensils instead of metal
- **Constipation:**
 - Drink at least 8 cups a day of liquid
 - Drink hot liquids like coffee, tea, and soup
 - Eat high-fiber foods such as nuts, seeds, dried fruit, beans, and whole grains
 - Be active every day

One of the first things that our patients will do is they'll start eating with plastic utensils or wooden chop sticks instead of metal utensils and that helps a little bit with that. Also trying some of the tart foods and drinks, and really playing with the sensory characteristics of food.

Again, a dietitian that knows food really well can help with those strategies. **Constipation** is another issue that I see a lot in our patients and so the main thing is really keeping liquid intake up, so drinking a lot of fluid, at least 8 cups a day and many times we'll

recommend that patients keep a jug that they know the volume it has it and then try and empty it and keep track of it that way cause it so important. Hot liquids, again like coffee, tea, soup, broths, those can help move gut contents through.

Once someone is not constipated, once you kind of clear what's constipating you, then preventative measures including eating some high-fiber foods such as nuts, seeds, dry fruits, beans, and whole grains but again as you add those back in you need to drink a lot of liquid to keep you stool soft. Then the probably the most important piece is getting up and moving because gravity and that movement and the change in blood flow is really going to help move that content through.

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Alleviating side effects of treatment

- Diarrhea
 - Drink plenty of water to replace fluid loss from diarrhea
 - Let carbonated drinks lose their fizz before you drink them; carbonation contributes to gas and discomfort.
 - Eat 5-6 small meals each day
 - Replace your sodium and potassium through bananas, apricots, potatoes, nuts, and broth
 - Eat low-fiber foods
 - Have food/drinks at room temperature
 - Avoid spicy foods, greasy foods, sugary drinks, milk products, alcohol, caffeine, and sugar alcohols (sugar-free gums and candy)
- Dry mouth:
 - Sip water throughout the day
 - Suck on hard candies or ice chips
 - Have sweet or tart foods and drinks

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Diarrhea is another issue that I saw some of you had listed. It's important to stay hydrated so replacing the fluid loss from diarrhea and some other strategies are letting the carbonated drinks, if you like those, let them lose their fizz before you drink them because that carbonation contributes to gas and discomfort.

Smaller meals each day. Really think about replacing those electrolytes such as sodium and potassium through bananas, apricots,

nuts, broth. During this time, it's probably a good idea to eat some lower residue, low fiber foods. Consume your foods and drinks at room temperature and avoid spicy foods, greasy foods, sugary drinks, milk products, alcohol, caffeine, and sugar-free gums and candy. **Dry mouth** is sometimes reported in our patients. It helps to sip on water throughout the day, suck on ice chips, perhaps even some hard candies, and then tart foods and a little bit of sweet also seem to help with dry mouth.

Nausea. It really is important to eat foods that are easy on your stomach. Again, it's helpful to not let yourself get too hungry and so eating those small meals each day and having foods around as soon as you have an appetite. Liquids should be spread out throughout the day whereas as during meals, not as much, so that you can get enough nutrients in. Consuming things at room temperature and then avoiding the similar foods; spicy, greasy, sugary, milk products, alcohol, caffeine, and sugar, alcohol.

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Alleviating side effects of treatment

- Nausea
 - Eat foods easy on your stomach
 - White toast, broth, plain yogurt, applesauce, rice, and bananas
 - Try lemon, lime, or tart flavored foods.
 - Eat 5-6 small meals each day
 - Choose foods that appeal to you
 - Have liquids throughout the day. Sip only a small amount of liquids during meals
 - Have food/drinks at room temperature
 - Avoid spicy foods, greasy foods, sugary drinks, milk products, alcohol, caffeine, and sugar alcohols (sugar-free gums and candy)



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Emerging Research: Specialized Immunonutrition


European Urology
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Brief Communication
Effects of Immunonutrition for Cystectomy on Immune Response and Infection Rates: A Pilot Randomized Controlled Clinical Trial

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- Patients were given a protein drink with or without special immunonutrients (fish oil, arginine, nucleotides, and vitamin A) before and after cystectomy in a 29 person pilot trial
- Those that received the immunonutrients had reduced complication and infection rates compared to those that did not (Hamilton-Reeves 2016)
- Larger trials are needed to determine efficacy



We ran a trial in cystectomy patients where we gave a drink, it's called *immuno-nutrition* before surgery and after surgery. [Click [here](#) to read about this study.] In this trial, we found that the patients that took the immuno-nutrition before and after surgery had fewer complications and fewer infections after the surgery than those that did not. We also looked at a lot of different immune markers, the immune and inflammatory response and saw differences between patients that got these immuno-nutrients compared to those

that got similar calories and protein in a different kind of nutrition drink that didn't have those immuno-nutrients. This is another area of emerging research where we need larger trials. This is something that is available over-the-counter if you are preparing for cystectomy that you could ask your physician about or your dietitian that you're working with. Larger trials really are needed to complete change practice but this early data is suggestive that there might be a benefit.

Another area of emerging research are ketogenic diets. Ketogenic diets are really high fat, very low carb diets. There are some animal models that show promise in slowing tumor growth in solid tumors. There's a pilot trial in mixed advanced cancer types that shows improvement in quality of life but these trials are not bladder so they're head and neck, lung, pancreatic, brain, and breast. So I don't have any evidence to tell you one way or the other but this is of interest to the research community.





Emerging Research

- Ketogenic diet- a very high fat, low carbohydrate diet
 - Animal models have shown some promise in slowing tumor growth (Klement, 2016)
 - A pilot trial in mixed advanced cancer types showed an improvement in quality of life (Schmidt, 2011)
 - Trials in head and neck, lung, pancreatic, brain, and breast are currently underway
- This treatment has not been tested or proven safe in bladder cancer treatment



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How should I eat during treatment?



- TAKE HOME MESSAGE:
 - Continue with a healthy, balanced diet
 - Eat adequately to prevent weight gain
 - Use symptom-specific tips
 - Consult a dietitian, preferably with credentialing as a CSO (certified specialist in oncology).

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How should I eat during treatment?

The take home message is to continue with a healthy balanced diet as well as you can, eat adequately to prevent weight gain, but also eat adequately to prevent weight loss, use symptom specific tips and especially during treatment, it's very helpful to meet with a dietitian that knows about cancer drugs and the side effects with those drugs and so looking for credentials another CSO, a [Certified Specialist in Oncology](#), for a dietitian might be more helpful.

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