



Life After Head and/or Neck Cancer: Establishing Your New Normal

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Objectives

- Will understand the types of treatments and potential post-surgery side effects.
- Will learn ways to adjust recipes to increase calories and improve moisture.
- Will learn ways to modify food and fluid textures to improve nutritional intake.

Treatments

- Radiation therapy
- Chemotherapy
- Surgery
 - Esophagectomy – surgery to remove some or most of the esophagus. Often a small part of the stomach is removed as well.
 - Laryngectomy – surgery involving the removal of part or all of the larynx (voice box)

Post surgery

- Enteral Nutrition
 - Typically for 1-2 weeks after surgery
 - Registered Dietitian (RD)
 - Works with Provider to determine energy/protein needs and identifies the most appropriate formula to meet those needs
 - The length of time varies
 - Nutrition plans are individualized

Potential Problems/Side Effects

- From Surgery
 - Scarring
 - Sore mouth/throat
 - Painful swallow
 - Change in sense of taste or loss of taste
 - Unintended weight loss

Potential Problems/Side Effects, cont.

- From Radiation Treatment
 - Chewing problems
 - Dental
 - Thick saliva
 - Dry mouth
 - Dehydration
 - Swallowing problems
 - Scar tissue/pain/swelling

Potential Problems/Side Effects, cont.

- From chemotherapy
 - Decreased or heightened sense of smell
 - Altered taste/loss of taste
 - Nausea/vomiting
 - Unintended weight loss
 - Altered GI function
 - Decreased flexibility of esophagus
 - Change in anatomy
 - Reflux

Typical Diet Progression

- Liquid Diet
 - Clear Liquid – juices, gelatin, broth, tea, popsicles, fruit ice, coffee
 - Excluding acidic drinks when applicable
 - Full Liquid – blended soups, cream soups, milk, yogurt, pudding
- Puree Diet
- Mechanical Soft – ground/minced or chopped
- Regular diet
- Thickened liquids – treatment may cause change in ability to swallow thin liquids
 - Pudding– pudding cup; eat with spoon
 - Honey– think pouring honey
 - Nectar– slightly thicker than a chilled Ensure

Dehydration and/or Dry mouth

- Adding Moisture
 - Take small sips with meals
 - Cream vegetables
 - Use gravy, sauce, or cream sauce
 - Use fruit ice, popsicles, or sherbet
 - Lemon drops to moisten mouth
 - Chew gum
 - Crushed ice

Example of adding moisture

Green Beans



Creamed Green Beans



Example adding moisture, cont.

Grilled Chicken
Sandwich



Avocado Chicken
Sandwich



Unintentional Weight Loss

- Adding Calories
 - Fortify Foods
 - Half and half
 - Greek yogurt
 - Cottage/ricotta cheese
 - Cheese sauce, mayo, avocado, hummus
 - Multiple meals/snacks throughout the day
 - Cheese/crackers, deviled eggs or egg salad, avocados, hummus

Unintentional Weight Loss, cont.

- Other ways to add calories
 - Add applesauce to gelatin
 - Make custards, quiches, casseroles
 - Carnation Instant breakfast
 - Milkshake/smoothie
 - Fortify milk
 - Nutritional Supplement

Comparison of Calories

Plain Omelet
(160 kcals, 11g PRO)



Omelet with Cheese
(358 kcals, 22g PRO)



Red Flags

- Loss of appetite
 - Early Satiety
 - Unintentional wt loss
 - Greater than 5lbs in 1 week
 - Greater than 10lbs in 1 month



Red Flags

- GI Intolerance
 - Nausea
 - B.R.A.T., bland foods, avoiding fried foods, spicy foods, avoid complete emptying of stomach, foods with strong odors
 - Vomiting
 - Monitor hydration, carbonate beverages (Sprite, Ginger Ale, broth)
 - Constipation
 - Increasing water/fluids, vegetables (ruffage), increase fiber (Metamucil/Benefiber)
 - Diarrhea
 - Sports drinks, Pedialyte

References

- American cancer society www.acs.org
- Cancer research UK www.cancerresearchuk.org

The background features a vertical gradient from light orange at the top to a deep red at the bottom. Scattered throughout are various silhouettes of leaves and flowers in a muted, dusty purple color. The word "Questions?" is centered in the lower half of the image.

Questions?