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# FOOD

## *and cancer*



The causes of cancer are numerous and not fully known. There are endogenous causes, related to the genetic inheritance of individuals and exogenous causes, among which are environmental pollution, smoking, diet, viral infections, precancerous lesions, etc.

### HAS DOUBTS? ASK US

Call us

(+34) 948 255 400

Or we call him

 Su teléfono  **SUBMIT** I have read and accept the [Privacy Policy](#)

Nutritional assessment is essential since malnutrition is very frequent in these patients.

The diet must always be individualized, taking into account the needs and preferences of the patient.

Food and nutritional factors have been widely associated with different neoplasms, estimating that around 35% of cancers would be related to these factors.

The different epidemiological evidences suggest that close to 90% of all neoplasms would be linked, in part, to environmental factors. Leaving tobacco consumption aside, diet would play an important role in this association between lifestyles and cancer.

### Symptoms in the cancer patient

**Anorexia or loss of appetite** : this symptom can appear due to metabolic alterations, hormones related to the growth of the tumor, nausea, vomiting, digestive alterations, inflammation of the digestive tract and as a result, poor absorption of nutrients. To this, it is usually added a certain depression, change in the sense of taste, rejection of certain foods, etc. Situations all derived from chemotherapy treatments and radiotherapy.

**Asthenia or generalized tiredness** : usually precedes weight loss and obeys, in most cases, the invasion of the tumor in some organs and tissues such as lymphatic or blood in a way that prevents good oxygenation of tissues and reduces the ability of pulmonary aeration.

### Food and lifestyle recommendations

Choose diets based on vegetables, rich in various vegetables, fruits and legumes.

Maintain a reasonable body weight

Devote an hour a day to exercise.

Eat at least 400-800 g of vegetables and fruits every day.

Eat at least 600-800 g of cereals, legumes and tubers daily.

Choose minimally processed foods.

Limit the consumption of sugar.

Limit alcoholic beverages.

**Depressive syndrome** : the social isolation, the sequelae left by the treatments and the appearance of physical alterations such as alteration of taste and smell, hair loss and alterations in mood, lead to states of depression, anxiety and fear that influence the appetite.

The treatments used in tumors (chemotherapy, radiotherapy, bone marrow transplantation, etc.) have serious effects on the general health of the patient. They are very toxic compounds for the body and cause inflammation of different tissues, especially the digestive system.

This causes that a good absorption of nutrients can not be carried out. They can cause digestive disorders, nausea and vomiting and as a consequence a noticeable decrease in appetite.

**1. Chemotherapy** : Chemotherapy can cause anorexia, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or constipation, inflammation and ulcers in the mouth, changes in the taste of foods and infections. Symptoms that affect nutrition can be critical if they last for more than two weeks. Both the frequency and the severity of these symptoms will depend on the type of drug used for chemotherapy, the dose, as well as the other medications and treatments that are administered at the same time. Nutrition can be seriously affected when the patient has a fever for prolonged periods, since fever increases the body's caloric need.

[> Learn more about chemotherapy](#)

**2. Radiotherapy** : **Radiation** therapy to the area of the neck and head can cause anorexia, changes in the perception of the flavors, dry mouth, inflammation of the mouth and gums, problems in swallowing, jaw spasms, cavities and infections. Irradiation of the thoracic cavity can cause esophageal infection, swallowing problems, esophageal reflux (when the content of the stomach is returned to the esophagus), nausea or vomiting. Radiation to the area of the pelvis or abdomen could cause diarrhea, nausea and vomiting, inflammation of the bowel and rectum, or fistula formation. Radiation therapy can also cause fatigue and, as a consequence, lack of appetite. Long-term effects may include narrowing or chronic intestinal inflammation, precarious absorption or obstruction of the gastrointestinal tract.

[> Learn more about radiotherapy](#)

**3. Immunotherapy** : It is usually associated with fatigue, fever and weakness that lead to decreased appetite and increased need for protein and calories.

[> Learn more about immunotherapy](#)

Limit the consumption of red meat, maximum 80 g per day.

Limit the consumption of fatty foods, especially those of animal origin.

Limit the use of salt in the kitchen and the consumption of salty foods.

Avoid charred foods, do not use dietary supplements.

Eliminate tobacco use.

Avoid the consumption of smoked foods, salted, braised, preserved in vinegar and generally cooked directly on the fire or smoke.

Do not take food that is too hot or too cold.

Maintain a regular meal habit, in quantity and schedule.

Drink plenty of fluids, especially between meals.

**REQUEST AN APPOINTMENT**  
in Medical Oncology

*maybe*  
**HE INTERESTES**

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## CLINICAL STORIES

Our patients tell their experience. Stories of hope, struggle and overcoming.

