

Nutrition Counseling



A Patient's Perspective

Last summer, between two cycles of chemotherapy, I started radiation treatment for a neck tumor. I managed to make it through radiation without much difficulty. However two weeks after radiation ended I was still experiencing side effects which made it difficult to eat.

When I returned to the cancer center for my last dose of chemotherapy, I was surprised to find that the taste changes and dry mouth I had been experiencing resulted in a ten pound weight loss. The nutrition counselor visited me during chemotherapy. She listened while I explained how I was not able to taste the foods I enjoyed, and now, I was plagued with persistent dry mouth.

She offered me suggestions for the dry mouth such as sucking on sour hard candies or squeezing lemon into my water. The nutrition counselor suggested that I try using plastic ware rather than silverware, explaining that the metallic taste could be exaggerated by the chemotherapy. She encouraged me to frequently rinse my mouth with baking soda and warm water to kill bad tasting bacteria. In addition, she encouraged me to use herbs, spices and condiments to enhance the taste of food. Within a few weeks, I was able to enjoy my favorite foods again. Her suggestions and encouragement helped me get through those tough weeks following radiation.

For more information about nutrition services at the Joan Karnell Cancer Center, please contact Debra DeMille MS, RD, CSO, at 215.829.6560 or Carly Roop, RD, at 215.829.6737.