

Flinders Wellness Blog

This new section of the newsletter will host short submission on topics related to wellness from The Flinders clinicians and researchers. The first submission is from Professor Bogda Koczwara. Bogda is a Senior Medical Oncologist at Flinders Medical Centre specialising in treatment of breast cancer and the care of cancer survivors. For more information about Bogda see [Professor Bogda Koczwara - Flinders University](#)

Eating well after cancer

After the Festive Season, the topic of how to eat better is often on people's agenda so here are some quick reminders and tips that people affected by cancer may find useful to reach their healthy eating goals.

We recognise that these goals may not apply to all patients with cancer – some cancer types may pose unique challenges to eating, as can specific cancer treatments which may lead to change in appetite or problems absorbing nutrients. If in doubt, our specialist advice from your oncologist, general practitioner or a dietitian may help (see more details below).

1. What is healthy diet?

A healthy diet is balanced, with variety of food consumed, close to the source (avoiding highly processed food), low in sugar and alcohol, and based on the Australian Dietary Guidelines. For details about healthy eating and a suggested meal plan see the resources below:

[Healthy eating doesn't have to be hard](#) | Cancer Council

[Smart eating fast facts](#) | Dietitians Australia

[Australian Dietary Guidelines](#) | Dietitians Australia

2. Why does healthy eating matter after cancer?

There are many reasons why healthy eating is beneficial **after cancer**. Firstly, because it may assist in maintaining healthy weight. Weight loss and malnutrition can adversely affect muscle function, quality of life and be associated with cancer treatment toxicity. Similarly, excessive weight gain and obesity in some cancers is associated with higher risk of cancer recurrence and development of other chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. Secondly, healthy diet ensures gut health which is associated with better ability to fight infections. Lastly, healthy diet is associated with improved mood.

3. What about a diet that starves cancer?

Research findings from clinical trials of calorie restriction and intermittent fasting currently remain inconclusive and any patients who wish to consider intermittent fasting should do so under supervision of a dietitian. For an excellent scientific summary of data please see [Intermittent fasting in the prevention and treatment of cancer](#). More information on this subject can be found in this article [Is a fasting diet beneficial to cancer patients](#).

4. Do you need help to manage your diet?

Join us for a drop-in session with the Wellness Centre dietitian on Tuesdays and Wednesday mornings 10-11:30am to see our CWC dietitian. If this isn't suitable, then for personalised evidence based advice we recommend you see an Accredited Practising Dietitian(APD), your GP can facilitate a referral with most patients eligible for services under the [chronic disease management plan](#).

Drop by the Wellness Centre and pick up some resources or check out these online resources:

[Food and nutrition](#) | Cancer Council

[Healthy living after cancer](#) | Cancer Australia

[Nutrition Booklet](#) | Flinders Cancer Wellness Centre

The Cancer Council will soon be rolling out the Healthy Living After Cancer program in March 2022 in the Cancer Wellness Centre. For further information visit the [Healthy Living after Cancer](#) website. Our research team is also developing a study that will evaluate the delivery of similar program online.

Please let us know if you want to know more by emailing Health.SALHNCancerWellnessCentre@sa.gov.au

Until then, happy eating!
