



جمعية زهرة  
ZAHRA ASSOCIATION

# A Chapter from a Book Campaign Guide



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A diagnosis of cancer can be challenging; some people express feelings of anxiety, fear, or psychological distress when first diagnosed.

### **Tips for Coping with a Breast Cancer Diagnosis**

1. Get information about your diagnosis: Write down your questions and concerns and bring them with you when visiting your healthcare team.
2. Keep communication channels open: Expressing genuine emotions, such as fear or sadness, can help everyone support one another.

### **Nutrition During Cancer Treatment**

People with cancer often need to follow dietary patterns that differ from the usual healthy diet. A general healthy diet typically consists of whole grains, fruits, vegetables, moderate amounts of protein, and limited added sugars, salt, and unhealthy fats.

### **Food Safety During Treatment**

Some cancer treatments can weaken the immune system, making it more difficult to fight infections, including foodborne illnesses. Therefore, extra care should be taken when preparing and consuming food:

- Store food at safe temperatures.
- Wash raw fruits and vegetables thoroughly.
- Use separate utensils, dishes, and cutting boards for meat and fresh foods.

### **Foods Recommended to Include in Your Diet:**

- Plant-based proteins.
- Healthy fats.
- Healthy carbohydrates.
- Vitamins and minerals.

### **Managing Treatment Side Effects Through Nutrition**

Certain dietary changes may help relieve treatment side effects:

1. Loss of appetite: Eat small meals or nutritious snacks throughout the day instead of three large meals.
2. Constipation: Drink plenty of water, consult your doctor about fiber supplements, and add vegetables and legumes to your meals.
3. Loss of taste: Try new foods with different spices or seasonings, or add strong flavors such as lemon juice.
4. Diarrhea: Choose foods and beverages that are high in sodium, such as sports drinks or soup broth.

**Note: Sports drinks and electrolyte beverages should be used when needed and as recommended by your healthcare team.**

## Physical Activity

Research shows that exercise is safe and beneficial for most people before, during, and after treatment.

### Benefits of Exercise:

- Improve physical and cognitive function.
- Strengthen muscles, support bone health, and improve range of motion.
- Support overall health and improve bodily functions.
- Help achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
- Reduce treatment side effects.
- Help manage breast cancer-related lymphedema.
- Reduce the risk of recurrence of some types of cancer.
- Reduce feelings of fatigue and extreme tiredness.
- Improve appetite.
- Relieve symptoms of depression and anxiety.
- Help improve sleep.

### How to Start Exercising

1. Start slowly: Begin with a few minutes each day. Exercise according to your ability and for short periods, taking frequent breaks.
2. Remember to warm up and cool down: Before and after exercise.
3. Vary your exercises: Try more than one type of physical activity.

**Note: Stop exercising and consult your doctor if you experience severe pain, dizziness, shortness of breath, or a high temperature.**

## **Adherence to Treatment and Taking Medications**

### **Tips for Improving Medication Adherence:**

1. Make it a regular habit: Link your medication time to a daily activity you do not forget, such as keeping your medication next to the coffee machine if you drink coffee every morning.
2. Use reminders and alerts: Use a wall calendar, a pill organizer divided by days of the week, or phone reminders.
3. Ask for help: Ask a family member or friend to remind you regularly about your medication schedule.

**Important Note:** Communication with your healthcare team is essential. If you experience any difficulty taking your medications for any reason, discuss it with your doctor promptly to find the right strategy for you and ensure you receive the maximum benefit from your treatment.

## **Medical Follow-Up After Treatment**

Care does not end once treatment is completed. You will continue to visit your healthcare team for regular follow-up care.

### **Follow-up Care Helps To:**

- Detect any signs of cancer recurrence early.
- Manage any long-term side effects resulting from treatment.
- Monitor and provide reassurance regarding your overall health.

### **Remember:**

Following your treatment plan and attending regular follow-up appointments with your healthcare team, along with taking care of your mental health and maintaining a healthy lifestyle, can contribute to improving your quality of life during and after your treatment journey.

## References

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