

Good nutrition is important when you have TB. Make sure you eat a healthy diet while you are sick.

NUTRITION AND TUBERCULOSIS

Eat Well To Get Better Faster

Although you don't feel well now, do not lose hope. Tuberculosis (TB) can be cured. Successful treatment involves these three important things:

- 1. Take your medicine** – Your doctor has prescribed the best drugs to treat your condition. Be sure to follow the instructions. Take your medicine every day. Even if you begin to feel better, continue to take your medicine until your doctor says that you can stop. The medicine helps kill the TB bacteria and prevents it from coming back.
- 2. Rest** – Get plenty of rest because this will help your body to recover.
- 3. Try to eat well** – Eating well is an important part of your TB treatment. It helps your body to recover faster. Poor appetite, nausea and fatigue can stop you from eating enough food or the right kinds of food. This makes it harder for your body to fight infection. Eating healthy helps you rebuild your muscle tissue and increase your strength.

Use Canada's Food Guide to make healthy food choices every day. A variety of foods from each food group is the best way to get all the nutrients you need to assist your recovery. Ask your Public Health Nurse for a copy of Canada's Food Guide. If you need extra assistance with your eating, ask to speak to a Registered Dietitian at 905-799-7700.

But what if I do not feel hungry, I feel sick to my stomach or I'm just too tired?

If you don't feel hungry or are feeling tired:

- Go outside for a bit before eating. Fresh air helps build your appetite.
- Eat when you feel hungry. Smaller meals spaced throughout the day may make you less tired.
- Eat foods that taste, smell, look and feel good to you.
- Eat your favourite foods and those that bring happy memories.
- Avoid foods that are fried or greasy.
- Eat slowly; don't rush the meal. Listen to your favourite music while eating. Eat with other people.

If you are feeling sick:

- Eat small amounts of food slowly and often.
- Eat foods that are cold or are at room temperature.
- Avoid fatty, fried or spicy foods.
- Snack on toast, crackers, fruit, vegetables and clear liquids, such as apple juice, cranberry juice, broth or soup or clear gelatine desserts.
- Sit up for about a half-hour after eating.
- Wear comfortable loose fitting clothing.
- Keep a record of the foods you ate, what time of day it was, what you were doing and if you felt nauseous. Share this information with your health care provider. Your doctor may also prescribe medicine that helps control nausea

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What can I do to gain back some weight?

- Try the tips on the previous page for dealing with a loss of appetite.
- Eat energy rich foods, such as peanut butter, nuts, seeds, avocados, homogenized milk, milkshakes, puddings, ice cream or cream soups.
- Eat snacks regularly, especially before bedtime. Have snacks at least 2 hours before the next meal so you still have time to build an appetite.

How much should I drink?

You need to drink plenty of fluids to help your kidneys remove body waste from the disease and drugs, and to prevent your sputum (mucous) from becoming too thick. You'll know you are drinking enough fluids when your urine is light-coloured (for example, like lemonade). Try fruit or vegetable juices, milk, soup, as well as water, tea, herbal teas, or coffee. All liquids count. Drink throughout the day.

Can I drink alcohol?

It is best to avoid alcoholic drinks. The drugs you take can be hard on the liver and alcohol adds further stress to this important organ. Some alcoholic drinks like red wine can interact with the drugs you are taking.

Is there anything that I cannot eat?

Drugs to treat TB can interact with food causing headaches, sweating, light-headedness and nausea. Check with your pharmacist or nurse for possible foods you may need to avoid when taking specific medications.

What foods should I eat?

Eat a variety of foods from the food groups in Canada's Food Guide every day. You may need to eat more: protein, vitamin B6, vitamin C, iron and calcium.

The following table highlights foods rich in these nutrients:

| You may need extra: | Examples of foods you can get this from: |
|---|---|
| Protein to build body tissues and blood. | All meat, poultry, fish, dried/canned legumes (peas, beans, lentils), eggs, milk, yogurt, cheese, and skim milk powder (add to soups and casseroles) |
| Vitamin B6 (Pyridoxine) to keep nerves healthy and to help the body use energy. You may be prescribed a Vitamin B6 supplement along with your medication. | All meat (especially liver), fish, poultry, nuts (especially hazelnuts, walnuts, peanuts), chick peas, soybeans, broccoli, brussel sprouts, cauliflower, peas, banana, cantaloupe, grapes, dried fruits (dates, raisins, figs), whole grain cereals and bread, wheat germ |
| Vitamin C to keep gums and lungs healthy, and to help heal wounds. | Kiwi, oranges, grapefruit, lemons, limes, cantaloupe, strawberries, broccoli, cabbage, cauliflower, kale, sweet peppers, tomatoes, potatoes |
| Iron to take oxygen from the lungs to the rest of your body. | Beef, veal, pork, ham, liver, fish, chicken (dark meat has more iron), dried/canned legumes (peas, beans, lentils), dried fruit (prunes, prune juice, dates, raisins, apricots), whole grain cereals, cream of wheat, enriched pasta and breads, dark green leafy vegetables, eggs, nuts and seeds Eat foods high in vitamin C along with iron rich foods to help your body use iron from food |
| Calcium to keep bones strong and help muscles work. | Milk and milk products, such as cottage cheese, yogurt, cheese, soybeans, fortified soy beverage, tofu (set in Calcium sulphate), broccoli, kale, sardines and salmon eaten with bones, baked beans (canned), almonds, orange juice with Calcium |

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For information on Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide, visit healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide.