



## Looking After Yourself

In this document, you will find strategies to help you include physical activity and healthy eating in your daily living.

	Page
1. Engage in Physical Exercise	1
2. Eat Healthy	4

This tool has been excerpted from the TEMPO (Tailored, wEb-based, self-Management PrOgram) symptom self-management program. The content of this document has been reviewed and approved by healthcare professionals.

## Suggestion 1: Engage in physical exercise

### What the experts have to say?

Exercise can help boost motivation, energy levels and mood in many ways.

- ✓ Increased fitness is associated with a greater sense of well-being. This is possibly because exercise may increase the number of endorphins (chemical messengers with mood-lifting qualities) in the brain.
- ✓ Exercise can distract you from your worries and block negative thinking.
- ✓ Exercising with others can increase your social contact, and can improve mood, energy, motivation fatigue, focus and sleep.
- ✓ Research shows that physical activity can help relieve chemotherapy side effects.

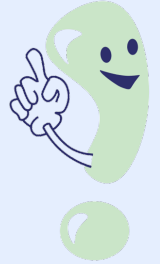
### How do I use this suggestion? Step-by-step guidance.

**Remember** to talk to your health care team before you begin any new physical activity plan. Ask about when you can start, and what type and intensity of physical activity is best for you.



The following suggestions are general physical activity guidelines:

**TOP TIP:** Increase your exercise bit by bit. If you start a type of physical activity and find you really enjoy it, increase the number of times it appears in your schedule slowly – you don't want to stop enjoying it, or harm yourself, by overdoing it. Remember, any start is a good one!



✓ **Set a realistic goal and book it**

- Set a realistic physical activity goal and develop a plan to achieve this goal.

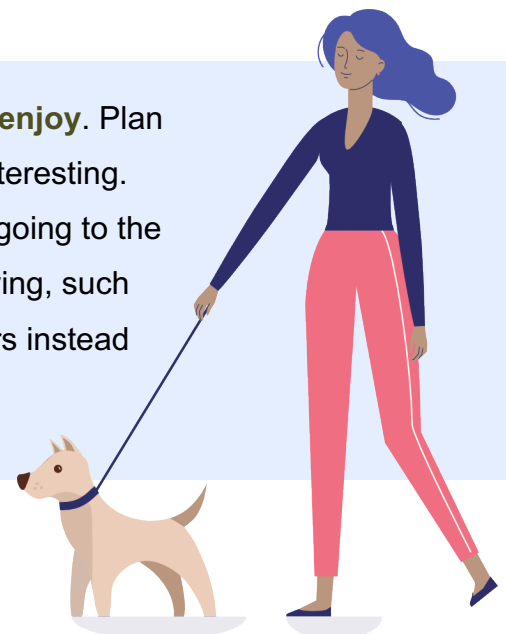
✓ **Track your progress**

- Identify barriers that might prevent you from achieving your goals and develop strategies to overcome them.

✓ **Include other people**

- You may find including someone else makes your activities more motivating and enjoyable while also reducing your sense of isolation. Others may even introduce you to new activities you hadn't thought of.

**TOP TIP:** In planning your physical activity, do what you **enjoy**. Plan activities you enjoy or think you'll find satisfying and/or interesting. Engaging in physical activity does not necessarily mean going to the gym, there are many other activities that will get you moving, such as walking, gardening, household chores, taking the stairs instead of the elevator.



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## Suggestion 2: Eat healthy

### What the experts have to say?

Healthy eating can play an important role in maintaining physical and mental health.

- ✓ It helps you deal with the stress of being unwell and helps you cope through treatment.
- ✓ It's associated with a greater sense of wellbeing.
- ✓ Poultry, lean meat and fish (which are high in protein) are made up of amino acids (the building blocks of protein) like tryptophan. Tryptophan helps the brain make serotonin, which is a chemical messenger that contributes to a sense of well-being.

### How do I use this suggestion? Step-by-step guidance.

Before you make any dietary changes, discuss them with your doctor, dietitian, or nurse. Some foods could affect medications or treatments you are taking or worsen side effects or symptoms. The following suggestions are general healthy eating guidelines that are usually appropriate for people with cancer.

- ✓ **Be prepared and strategize**
  - Keep a weekly activity plan and schedule food related activities (e.g. grocery shopping, cooking) into it.
  - Get in the habit of preparing very simple meals. A good example of a very simple, but healthy and nutritious meal, is baked beans on whole wheat toast with spinach and cherry tomatoes (takes only five to 10 minutes to prepare).
  - Prepare meals in advance. If you're having a good day, cook large portions of food and freeze them. If you tend to feel good in the morning, prepare dinner then.

✓ **Use available help**

- Do your grocery shopping online and have it delivered to your home. Some resources for online shopping are: Grocery Gateway in the Greater Toronto Area (<http://www.grocerygateway.com/>), IGA in Quebec ([https://www.iga.net/en/online\\_grocery](https://www.iga.net/en/online_grocery)) and Smart City Foods in Vancouver (<https://smartcityfoods.com/>).
- Other possible options include: Meals on Wheels (search for Meals on Wheels in your area), Jenny Craig ([www.jennycraig.com](http://www.jennycraig.com);; *may vary by province*), and Fuel Foods (<http://fuelfoods.ca/>). Check their websites or call to see if they deliver to your area.
- Ask for help from your partner, other family or friends in preparing meals and accept help when it's offered.

✓ **Consider supplements**

- Vitamin/mineral supplements cannot replace a healthy diet but can be helpful when you need to improve your nutrition. Some nutrients are toxic in high doses, whereas others might interact with other medications or treatments you might be taking, so it is important that you check with your doctor, pharmacist or a dietitian before deciding on a supplement. Dietitians work in hospitals and private practice and can also be found via <http://www.dietitians.ca/> or by calling 1-416-596-0857.

Based on the Canadian Food guide, some specific ideas about eating healthy are included in the table below:

Suggestion	What a 'serving' means
<p>Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seven to ten servings per day</li> <li>• Eat a variety of different fruits and vegetables</li> <li>• They are best eaten fresh and whole</li> <li>• Eat both raw and cooked vegetables</li> </ul>	<p>What is 'a serving' of vegetables?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ½ cup of fresh, frozen or canned vegetables</li> <li>• ½ cup of cooked vegetables, or 1 cup of raw vegetables</li> </ul>
<p>Ideas for eating more fruit and vegetables:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eat fruit as a substitute for sweet treats</li> <li>• Include vegetables in your lunchtime meal</li> <li>• Use frozen vegetables for greater convenience</li> <li>• Add extra portions of vegetables to your recipes</li> </ul>	<p>What is 'a serving' of fruit?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ½ cup of fresh, frozen or canned fruits</li> </ul>
<p>Eat foods high in dietary fiber:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wholegrain cereals, seeds, nuts, breads, fruit, vegetables, legumes, beans, peas and lentils</li> </ul>	<p>What is 'a serving' of cereal or bread?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ½ bagel</li> <li>• ¾ cup of cereal</li> <li>• ½ cup of cooked pasta or couscous</li> <li>• 1 slice of bread</li> </ul>
<p>Six to eight servings of grain products per day</p>	<p>What is 'a serving' of seeds or nuts?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ¼ cup of shelled nuts or seeds</li> <li>• ½ ride, bulgur or quinoa</li> </ul>
<p>Eat dairy (cheese, milk, yogurt):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two to three servings per day.</li> <li>• Consume reduced/low fat varieties of dairy when weight loss is desired.</li> <li>• Limit your intake of butter and cream, as they are high in saturated fat</li> </ul>	<p>What is 'a serving' of dairy?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 cup of milk or soy milk</li> <li>• ¼ cup of yogurt</li> <li>• 50g of cheese</li> </ul>

Suggestion	What a 'serving' means
<p>Eat fresh (unprocessed) red meat (beef, pork, lamb, veal):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two to three servings per day of meat or alternatives</li> <li>• Select lean cuts of meat</li> <li>• Limit or avoid intake of processed meats, as they are high in salt and fat</li> <li>• Limit your intake of charred or burnt meat</li> </ul>	<p>What is 'a serving' of meat and alternatives?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 75g of cooked fish, shellfish, poultry or lean meat</li> <li>• ¼ cup of cooked legumes</li> </ul>
<p>What if I don't eat red meat?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 150g of tofu</li> <li>• ¼ cup of shelled nuts and seeds</li> <li>• 2 eggs</li> <li>• 2 tbsp of peanut butter</li> <li>• Select lean cuts of chicken and remove the fat or skin</li> </ul>	<p>What are processed meats?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ham</li> <li>• Bacon</li> <li>• Sausages</li> <li>• Hot dogs</li> <li>• Salami</li> </ul>
<p>Eat foods high in omega-3 fatty acids: Canned tuna, salmon, sardines and mackerel, oily fresh fish (Atlantic salmon, swordfish and Spanish mackerel) and plant foods and oils (leafy vegetables, canola margarine, canola oil, flax, linseed/flaxseed oil, soybeans, soybean oil, walnuts and walnut oil).</p> <p>Ideas for eating foods high in omega-3 fatty acids:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sprinkle flax over your breakfast cereal</li> <li>• Choose soy and flax bread</li> <li>• Use flax and/or walnuts in homemade breads, muffins and cakes</li> <li>• Bake pears or apples stuffed with raisins and walnuts</li> <li>• Put soybeans in your blender and make a dip</li> <li>• Toss canned fish through a large salad</li> </ul>	<p>What is 'a serving' of fish or seafood?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 75 g (2 1/2 oz.)/125 mL (1/2 cup)</li> <li>• Eat at least two Food Guide Servings of fish each week.</li> <li>• Choose fish such as char, herring, mackerel, salmon, sardines and trout</li> </ul>

- Bake a spinach pie or seafood pizza
- Add soybeans to soups, casseroles and stews
- Add fish or seafood to mixed dishes, such as soups, pastas, stews, curries and casseroles
- Make fish cakes with canned fish

[http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/alt\\_formats/hpfb-dgpsa/pdf/food-guide-aliment/view\\_eatwell\\_vue\\_bienmang-eng.pdf](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/alt_formats/hpfb-dgpsa/pdf/food-guide-aliment/view_eatwell_vue_bienmang-eng.pdf)

## What others say about dealing with low motivation and energy

*“I think we feel a lot better since we started making sure we had proper, regular meals.”*

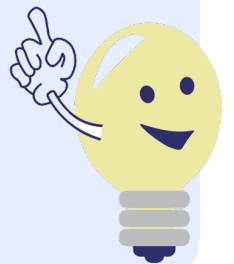
**Ahmed, diagnosed with prostate cancer.**

*“I was feeling tired and sluggish in the afternoons, but found that some exercise each morning, even if it was just a short walk down the street to get the newspaper, really helped me have more energy later in the day.”*

**Ahmed, diagnosed with prostate cancer.**

### Key Points: Dealing with low motivation and energy

1. Boosting your energy and motivation is tied to looking after yourself by getting regular exercise and eating well.
2. Planning exercise, choosing activities you enjoy and exercising with a family member or friend are great ways to increase the amount of exercise you do.
3. Eating well involves planning and preparation, but helps you deal with the stress of illness and caregiving.
4. Any change in your exercise habits and diet should be discussed with your health care team before you begin.





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## Resources for dealing with low motivation and energy

### Physical exercise

- <http://www.cancer.ca/en/prevention-and-screening/live-well/nutrition-and-fitness/physical-activity/?region=on>
- <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/hp-ps/hl-mvs/pa-ap/index-eng.php>
- <http://www.bccancer.bc.ca/our-services/services/library/recommended-websites/living-with-cancer-websites/exercise-for-people-with-cancer-websites>

### Managing fatigue

- <https://www.healthyfamiliesbc.ca/home/articles/always-tired>

### Healthy eating

- <http://www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-journey/living-with-cancer/nutrition-for-people-with-cancer/?region=on>
- <http://www.cancer.ca/en/prevention-and-screening/live-well/nutrition-and-fitness/eating-well/?region=on>
- <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/food-guide-aliment/index-eng.php>

If low motivation and energy persist, consider depression and seek medical advice.

## Resources for feeling sad, lonely or depressed

- <http://depressionhurts.ca/en/default.aspx>
- <http://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.ca/en>
- <http://www.cancer.ca/en/cancer-information/cancer-journey/recently-diagnosed/emotions-and-cancer/?region=on>

## Quebec

- <http://www.ementalhealth.ca/Quebec/Depression/index.php?m=heading&ID=33>
- <http://amiquebec.org/depression/>

## Challenging negative self-talk:

- <https://www.cancerandwork.ca/tools/unhelpful-thought-patterns/>
- <https://www.anxietybc.com/adults/challenge-negative-thinking>
- <http://www.cmhaff.ca/positive-attitude>

## Problem-solving techniques and goal setting:

- <https://www.cancerandwork.ca/survivors/workplace-wellbeing/change-your-thoughts-feelings/fill-out-changing-unhelpful-thoughts-worksheet/>