

Dietary recommendations during and after cancer treatment: Consistently inconsistent?

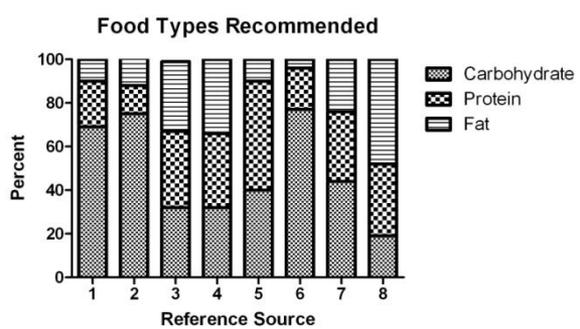
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Purpose

- Recent data reveals that dietary factors may influence outcomes in patients undergoing cancer treatment.
- Patient-centered information on dietary recommendations is limited.
- In this study, we assessed treatment and survivorship recommendations for cancer patients by evaluating dietary recommendations on the websites of all National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) member institutions.

Methods

- NCCN members were identified on www.nccn.org and individual websites were reviewed for nutritional content.
- Recommendations were categorized by meal frequency, diet type, macronutrient content, and other specific recommendations.
- Also assessed were all websites that were referred to within the nutrition sections of the NCCN member institution websites in order to assess their recommendations.



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Results

- Twenty-one NCCN member institutions were identified. Only 4 sites (19%) provided nutritional guidelines.
- Half promoted a low-fat, high-carbohydrate diet recommending 5:1 and 7:1 ratios of carbohydrate to fat food types, and half promoted weight maintenance during treatment, endorsing a 1:1 ratio of carbohydrate to fat.
- One third of all NCCN sites (n=7/21) had links to nine external websites.
- Four external websites provided nutrition guidelines, and half favored a low-fat, high-carbohydrate diet, while half favored high-caloric intake to maintain weight.

Conclusions

- Consistent online dietary recommendations are lacking for patients during and after cancer treatment.
- Given the lack of consensus on dietary recommendations, future research is warranted to develop evidenced-based guidelines that can be used by oncologists and patients alike.

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NCCN Member	Ref	Calories*	Protein*	Fat*	Carbohydrate*	Take C:P:F
Dana-Farber/Brigham and Women's Cancer Center	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	•5 or more servings of fruits and vegetables	29:09:04
Massachusetts General Hospital Cancer Center	2	N/A	•1/4 each meal	N/A†	•5-10 servings of fruits and vegetables •25-35 grams fiber •1/2 each meal vegetables •1/4 whole grains	78:13:13
Roswell Park Cancer Institute	3	•Adequate daily intake	•6-8 ounces meat, fish, or poultry daily, or equivalent in eggs, cheese, or beans	•Same as protein	•3-4 servings of vegetables •6-8 servings of grain or bread	22:24:22
Stanford Cancer Institute	4	•25-35 calories per kg of body weight	•45-60 grams	N/A	N/A	13:14:14

Referenced Web Sites						
Cancer Nutrition Center	5	•From high carbohydrate sources	•Small quantities of protein†	•Less than 3 tablespoons or 40 grams/day†	•High carbohydrate	04:05:01
Caring4cancer	6	•High-calorie foods	N/A	N/A	N/A	20:06:07
American Cancer Society	7	N/A	N/A	•Saturated: <10% •Trans: eliminate†	•At least 5 colorful sources of fruits and vegetables per day	15:11:08
National Cancer Institute.	8	•High calories to keep weight	N/A	N/A	N/A	05:09:13

*Amount per day if unspecified, †potentially conflicting information. Abbreviations: Ref = reference, N/A = not available, T = take, A = avoid, C = carbohydrate source, P = protein source, F = fat source