



Food, Nutrition and Cancer - Caregiving and Self Care Programs

Intended Audience

All members including people living with cancer, family members and significant caregivers.

Program Description

Life after cancer is an enlightened journey, often including a renewed commitment to health, diet and nutrition. This program, taught by a registered dietitian, offers a wide range of information and advice about food and eating, with an emphasis on providing essential tools to optimize health and promote longevity. As always, when food is the focus, comfort and joy are top priorities since food not only nourishes the body, it feeds the mind and soul as well.

Benefits and Impact

Everyone loves a class that involves cooking, eating and socializing, and this program offers the added benefit of promoting eating for optimum health. Other benefits include:

- evidence-based nutrition education with the latest research to back it
- hands-on experiential learning that helps transfer knowledge and skills to the home
- confidence, comfort, nourishment and fun
- takeaway recipes and information

What to Expect at a Session

Participants should come prepared to roll up their sleeves and get cooking! Each session features a different topic with complementary recipes. As members work together to create delicious healthy food, the facilitator instructs, answers questions, shares cooking tips and provides important information on ingredients. Afterwards, the entire group gathers to enjoy wonderful food and friendship. Occasionally, hands-on sessions will be partnered with a 'Nourish' lecture, developed by the Wellspring Centre for Innovation in Toronto.

Participant Comments

"Hands-on cooking, good team work, good instructor and a great meal."

"Very enjoyable and educational."

"Healthy food can be fun, interesting and delectable. It's more fun to cook in a group - we had a ball!"

What the Research Says:

Eating problems during intensive chemotherapy are perceived as highly stressful and can be, in the case of treatment-related anorexia, life threatening. Recommendations are made for interventions that could reduce the stress and nutritional difficulties for both patients and caregiver (McGrath, P. 2002. Reflections on Nutritional Issues Associated with Cancer Therapy. Cancer Practice 10(2): 94-101).

Studies about cruciferous vegetables and cancer have shown anticancer effects in cells and animals and "higher consumption of vegetables in general may protect against some diseases, including some types of cancer." (National Cancer Institute Fact Sheet, 4.31, June 7, 2012. Pub. No. F194.)

Program Frequency:

2 hours per week
1-2 weeks per program
1 program per session
 Winter, spring/summer, fall

Optimum Class Size: 12

Other Self Care Programs:

Energy Workshops
 Laughter Yoga
 Living Well with Cancer
 Book Discussion (*Ultimate Road Trip*)