This leaflet provides information on what to expect during radiotherapy and to help you to manage any side effects from treatment. You will receive advice from a dietitian during your treatment if required.

During radiotherapy your body needs more energy and protein than usual. The goal during treatment is to **MAINTAIN** your weight and meet your energy and protein needs. The benefits of maintaining weight include:

- A healthy immune system
- Improved recovery
- Reduces hospital admission due to malnutrition and dehydration
- Assists strength and energy levels

**Record your weight weekly and contact your nurse or dietitian if you are losing weight.**

Maintain your weight by:
- Making every mouthful count
- Eating snacks high in energy and protein
- Eating smaller, more frequent meals
- Aim for 6 small meals per day

Your Dietitian can advise you on food choices to suit your needs. Some ideas are shown in the table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Simple ways to add energy and protein</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Drink nourishing fluids</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flavoured or plain milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add cream/ice-cream to milkshakes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Enrich meals</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook in butter or oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add cheese/cream to meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use sauces/gravies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add extra butter/margarine to bread or vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrich milk with milk powder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Smart snacking</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spread bread/biscuits with dips, cheese or nut spreads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoghurt/dairy desserts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egg/chicken/cheese sandwich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk drinks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Food Preparation Hints**

If you will be staying away from home during treatment, consider what kitchen facilities will be available.

- A simple hand-held blender can be very useful for making milkshakes and smoothies or for pureeing food.
- Consider easy to prepare meals, convenience foods or frozen meals if you do not feel like cooking or do not have access to a good kitchen.
Side Effects
Side effects from radiation may be general (e.g. poor appetite or fatigue) or relate to the area of your body being treated.

Diarrhoea
- Drink fluids (avoid alcohol & coffee)
- Use medications as directed
- Greasy, fried or spicy foods, caffeine and alcohol might make your diarrhoea worse

Nausea
- Try not to skip meals; an empty stomach can make you feel worse
- Eat small, frequent meals
- Eat room temperature or cold foods
- Dry or salty foods may be better tolerated
- Avoid cooking smells
- Try ginger containing food or fluids
- Use medications as directed

Poor Appetite
- Eat small, frequent meals
- Don’t wait until you are hungry to eat or drink
- Treat yourself to your favourite foods
  Include nourishing food and fluids, or enrich food (see page 1)

Taste Changes
- If foods taste bland, try adding extra seasoning or herbs (e.g. basil/thyme), mature cheese or onion to add flavour
- If some foods have an unpleasant taste, try foods that are bland and cold
- Keep testing a wide range of foods until your taste returns

Sore mouth or throat
- Continue regular mouth cares
- Try a straw with fluids if you have mouth ulcers
- Soft/minced moist foods with extra sauces may help
- Avoid salty, spicy, or acidic foods
- Avoid very hot or very cold foods
- Take pain relief medication as prescribed
- If you have difficulty swallowing or are coughing or choking, ask to be referred to a Speech Pathologist

Pain
Pain can mean that you won’t want to eat as much. It is important to discuss pain with your doctor so that medication can be given.

If you are finding it hard to drink fluids
Please see a doctor immediately to avoid becoming dehydrated.