

## GETTING READY FOR SURGERY

### WHAT IS PREHABILITATION?

**Prehabilitation**, or "**prehab**" programming is a way to prepare your body for surgery. It may include changing the way you eat, move, and take care of your body. The goal of prehab is to get you in the best shape possible to build up energy for surgery. This may be especially important in cancer surgery, when you have had chemotherapy or radiation therapy, or your body is already tired from fighting cancer. Often, patients with cancer unintentionally lose weight & need to focus on building themselves back to be stronger.



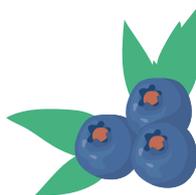
Prehabilitation includes nutrition, physical activity and lifestyle changes to get ready for surgery.

### NUTRITIONAL TIPS

There is no "one size fits all" best diet for anyone, and this includes patients having surgery for stomach cancer. It is very important to work with a Registered Dietitian both before and after surgery to make sure that you are eating what your body needs. Nutrition for patients with cancer is still a developing area of research.

These are some recommendations for eating as a part of your surgical prehabilitation plan:

- Working with a dietitian or nutritionist to develop a food plan that fits your body's needs and your lifestyle is a priority.
- Getting enough protein is important. At least 50g per day is recommended, but this is different for every person.
- Canada's Food Guide offers healthy meal ideas & answers some questions you may have about general nutrition.
- Sometimes patients with cancer lose a considerable amount of weight unintentionally. Having nutrition-supplement drinks or inserting a temporary feeding tube may be helpful options to get your body back to a healthy state in some cases.
- It is common to lose muscle before fat. If this happens to you, discuss with your healthcare team as nutritional supplements may be indicated.



# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Physical activity is an important part of maintaining health and building strength before surgery through a prehab program. It can be hard to know what exercise is right for each person. It is important to note that there is a huge variety of exercise programs available, and doing even 10 minutes a day is better than nothing!

When starting or changing an exercise program, work with your healthcare team including an occupational therapist (OT).

Here are some general recommendations backed by research for exercise before cancer surgery:

- Working with a physiotherapist, nurse or other health and fitness staff can be helpful. Supervised exercise programs can help to motivate patients to keep going and to follow activity plans that are specific to their individual goals.
- Function after surgery (i.e., how easily you can move about in your daily life, endurance, etc.) is improved when patients participate in prehab exercise. This includes aerobic, resistance and inspiratory muscle training.
- Logging your exercise can be helpful in communicating with your healthcare team and keeping you on top of your goals.



You can use the "FITT" method outlined here to help create your personal prehab fitness goals:

**Frequency** - how often are you doing physical activity? Try to aim for 30 minutes daily

**Intensity** - how hard is the activity? Moderate intensity on average is recommended (i.e., brisk walk, heavy chores, badminton, etc.)

**Time** - how long? 30 minutes is recommended, although this can be broken into chunks

**Type** - a balance of some aerobic activity (walking, biking, swimming) and some resistance training (using resistance bands or dumbbells) should be included

It is recommended that you bring comfortable walking/running shoes with you to the hospital. After surgery, rehabilitation will begin as soon as you are ready to be up on your feet!

# WHOLE BODY WELLNESS

Getting your body ready for surgery is about more than just eating right and staying active. The tips below can help you feel your best:

- Quit smoking & cut down on your alcohol consumption if you smoke or drink alcohol. If you do not, don't start!
- Prioritize sleep - you should try to get 7-8 hours of sleep per night to help your body recover energy. Try to avoid using screens before bed & have a consistent sleep schedule.
- Mental health - a new cancer diagnosis can be incredibly stressful. Your mental health is just as crucial as your physical health. Practices such as meditation, talking with loved ones or getting in touch with counsellors & support groups can be helpful.

## NOTES: