

## **Eating Well During the Holidays When You Have Cancer**

This handout offers information on how to eat well during the holidays.

### **Reduce stress**

- Ask your family and friends to help you prepare meals.
- Tell others if you do not have the energy for some holiday celebrations.
- Offer to bring drinks, napkins, paper plates or a holiday centerpiece instead of making food.
- Give your body the rest it needs during the holiday season.

### **Manage symptoms**

- Eat before you leave home in case there are not many food choices for you.
- Eat small amounts so you do not get that “overfull” feeling.
- Eat foods you have not had before. New flavours might taste good to you at this time.
- Do not eat foods with strong odours if they make you feel nauseous.
- Drink ginger ale or soda water and chew gum or suck on a mint to help cover up the odours of other foods.
- Ask your oncologist if it is okay for you to drink alcohol.

### **Eat safely**

- Choose foods from the inside of the buffet table, where less people may have touched it.
- Throw out foods left out of the refrigerator for 2 hours or longer.
- Do not eat or drink unsafe foods such as: homemade eggnog, unpasteurized apple cider, desserts made with raw eggs, unpasteurized cheese, or sashimi and sushi made with raw fish. These foods can be unsafe for you if your immune system is low.

*This handout was created by the Patient Education Program at the Durham Regional Cancer Centre/Lakeridge Health. It was last reviewed in November of 2024.*