



# Your Guide to Prehabilitation

Optimizing Your Health for  
Treatment at UHN

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This Guide belongs to \_\_\_\_\_

This Guide was developed for the UHN Prehabilitation Program. For more information about the program, please contact [prehabilitation@uhn.ca](mailto:prehabilitation@uhn.ca)

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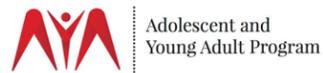
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# Introduction

Welcome to the University Health Network (UHN) Prehabilitation Program.

## What is prehabilitation?

Treatments can put a lot of stress on our system. Studies have found that being healthier before treatments like surgery reduces the chances of complications and increase the chances of a successful recovery. **Prehabilitation, or prehab for short,** is a process to improve your health before treatment (like surgery). Our team will help you do this through exercise, nutrition, and stress management techniques.

Prehab has many benefits, including:

- higher physical fitness,
- better nutritional status,
- lower stress,
- less fatigue,
- better quality of life,
- shorter hospital stay, and
- fewer surgical complications.

The aim of prehab is to help prepare you for treatment so that you feel better throughout and after it.

**Your prehab program will be tailored to your needs and preferences.** Your prehab program is based on an evaluation of your health and will be delivered by a health professional with expertise and experience in prehab, such as kinesiologists for exercise, dietitians for nutrition, and psychologists for stress management. Doctors assist with any medical concerns you may have before your treatment.

Please tell any of the team members if you have difficulties with or questions about any of the prehab programming. If you don't find our program challenging enough for you, speak with our



## Goals of prehabilitation?

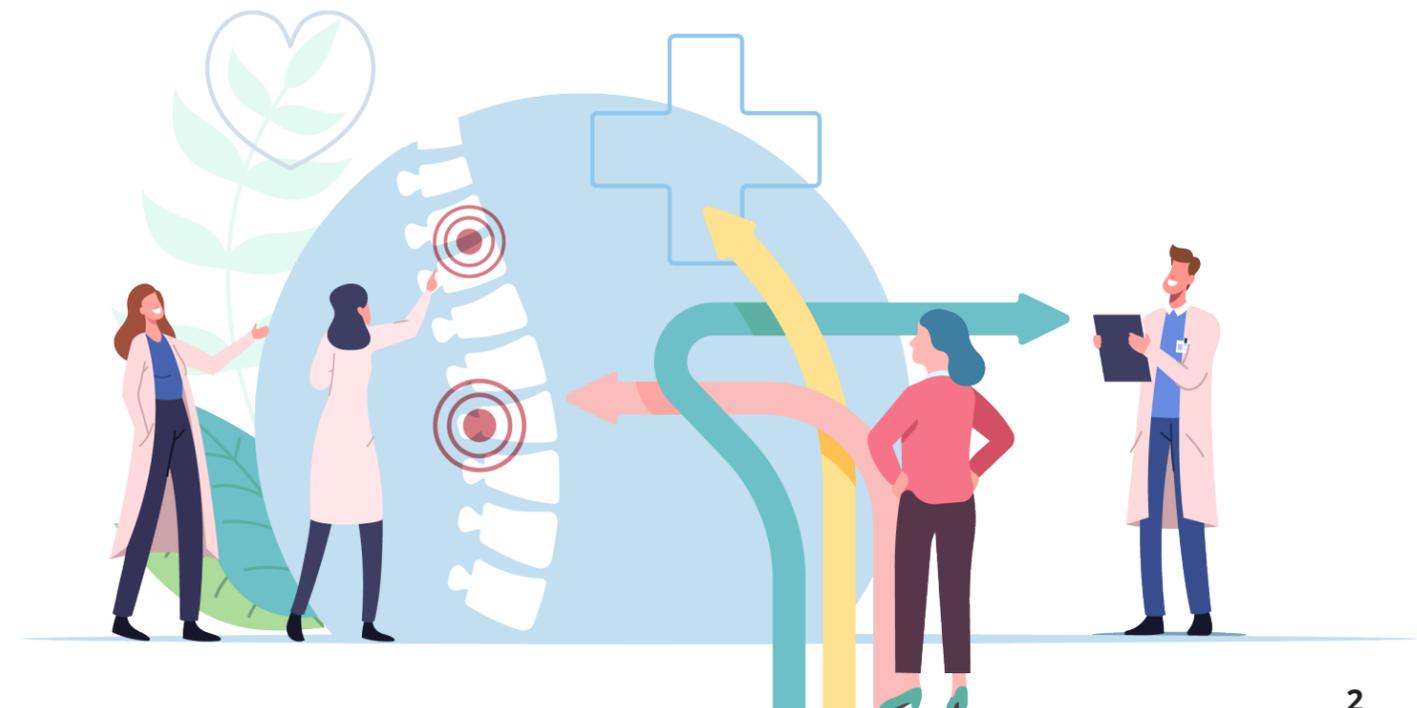
1. improve your physical function,
2. improve your nutritional status,
3. improve your stress levels, and
4. make sure that your other health conditions are well-managed.

To help you reach these goals, prehab may involve exercise and physical activity, nutritional support, and stress-reduction strategies over the weeks or months before treatment.

Most of the research on prehab has looked at its effect on people who have surgery. The research shows that prehab can improve your physical fitness as well as your mental and emotional health before and after surgery. Prehab can also reduce complications associated with surgery and reduce the amount of time you spend in hospital after surgery, chemotherapy, radiation, and stem cell transplant.

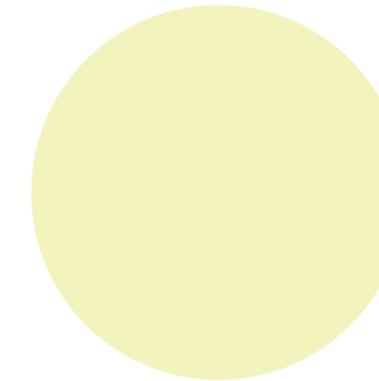
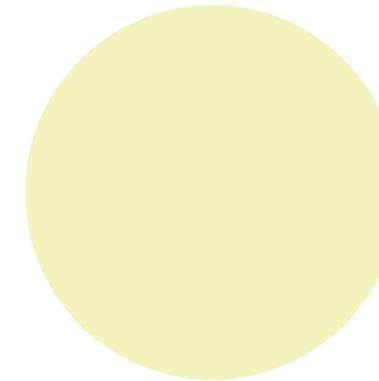
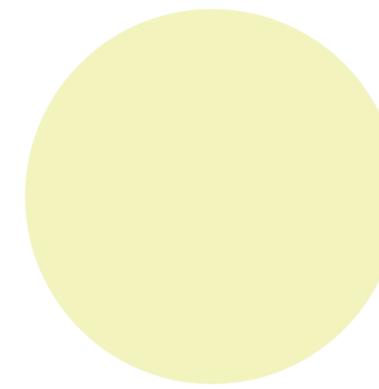
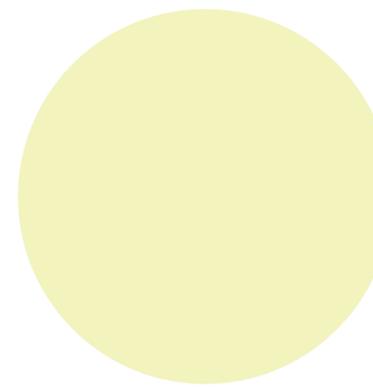
## How to use this guide

This manual outlines your prehab program, including the exercise prescription, nutrition information, and techniques for stress management. It also suggests ways to stick with the program and gives you space to record your activities. To monitor your progress so that we can adjust your program to meet your needs, we've included places for you to write down your exercise, nutrition, and stress management activities. You can also comment on what is working well for you and what is not working so well.



# Chapter 1

# Exercise prehab



## Exercise prehabilitation.

### Physical activity and exercise

**Physical activity** is any movement of your body that uses energy (or calories). Physical activity includes gardening, walking to the grocery store, climbing the stairs, getting in and out of your chair, moving with an assistive device, lifting equipment and so on. It is not always something you do with the goal of improving your physical fitness but is something you do for fun or as a part of another task (like commuting or cleaning).

**Exercise**, on the other hand, is a type of physical activity that you do regularly with the goal of improving physical fitness.

The prehab program uses exercise that is tailored to your health, preferences, and goals to make sure that you are as fit as you can be for treatment. Exercise is the focus of our prehab program, but we highly recommend adding physical activity of any kind to your lifestyle to help improve your physical fitness.

The prehab team may give you a stability ball, resistance bands, and an exercise mat to help with the exercises you may be doing at home.

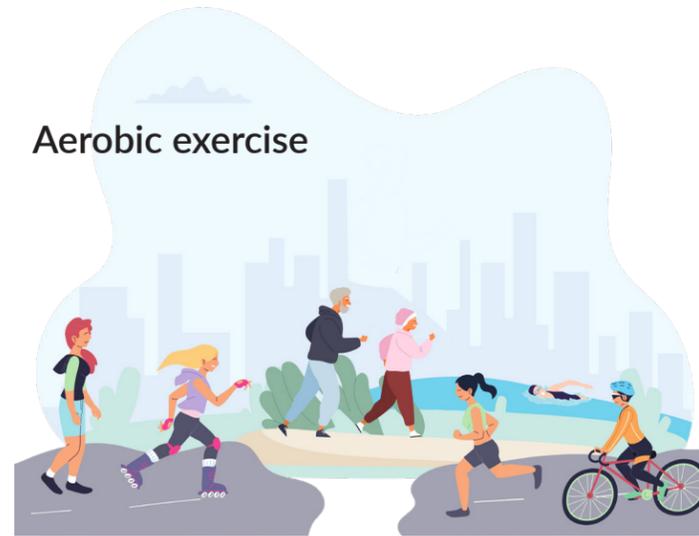
## Exercise: The basics

There are two main types of exercise: **aerobic** (also known as “cardio”) and **resistance** (also known as “weight training”). Both types of exercise have important benefits.

Similar to aerobic and resistance training, stretching to maintain flexibility (range of motion in your joints) is also important to ensure that you can reach things, turn, bend, and twist.

Our staff will work with you to create an exercise program that includes aerobic, resistance, and flexibility training, tailored just for you. The team will show you how to do the exercises to ensure you can do them safely.

### Aerobic exercise



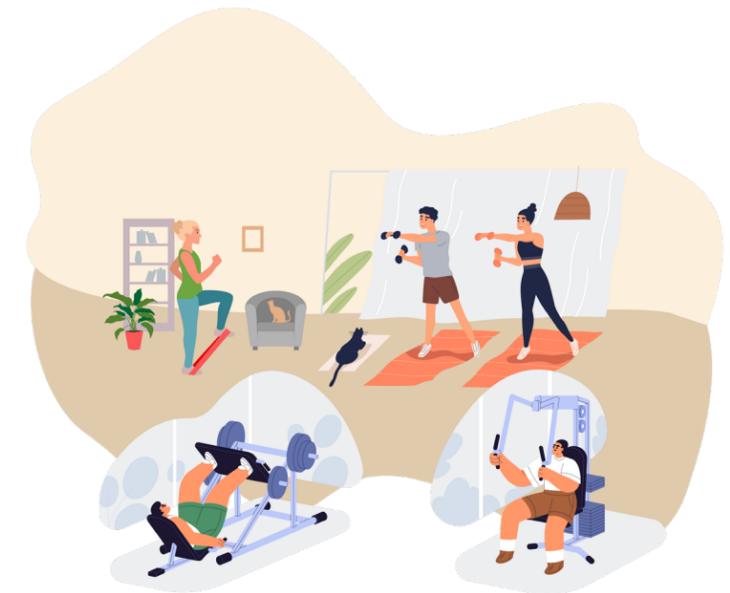
Aerobic training, also known as “cardio,” improves stamina, which is your body’s ability to contract your muscles many times over a long period, like walking, running, skating, or rowing. By doing more of this type of training, you will become less tired during and after your activities.

Aerobic fitness is very important for activities that are intense and last for long times. It can also improve treatment experiences and results.

### Resistance exercise

Resistance training, also known as weight training, is the most popular way to build strong, healthy muscles. Doing the exercises safely is key to avoiding injuries and promoting physical function. Physical function is how well your body can move to be able to do certain tasks, such as being able to lift enough weight to carry your groceries or get yourself up easily from the ground.

Resistance training can prepare your body for treatment and return to your usual activities earlier.



### Flexibility training



Flexibility describes how well you bend, twist, turn, and stretch parts of your body. Flexibility training, or stretching, is an often forgotten part of an exercise program, but should be included to help you maintain a full range of motion in your joints.

Flexibility may be an important part of your treatment recovery because your tissues can become stiffer if you don’t move for a while (such as staying in bed for a long time after surgery), or because of certain treatments (for example, radiation).

## Get FITT

Your prehab team will use the **FITT principle** to design your exercise prescription. FITT stands for **frequency, intensity, time**, and **type**.

### Frequency

The frequency of exercise refers to how often you should exercise. It is important to exercise often enough to challenge your body but also give you enough rest time for your body to heal and adapt. The frequency of your exercise is often described in the number of times per week you exercise, such as "4 times per week."

### Intensity

Intensity refers to how hard you exercise.

In aerobic exercise, intensity usually depends on the speed or distance that you exercise.

In resistance training exercises, the intensity usually refers to a combination of

- the weight you can lift (for example, 5 pounds) or the resistance of your exercise band, and
- the number of repetitions of the exercise can do in a row.

### Monitoring your intensity

- To ensure that your exercise program is both safe and helpful, you will need to do your exercises at the right intensity. Your prehab team will run tests and measurements to estimate the right intensity for you.
- To monitor the intensity while you exercise, your prehab team may ask you to use the Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE) scale or measure your heart rate. We use the RPE scale to measure the intensity of both aerobic and resistance exercise. We use heart rate to measure the intensity of aerobic exercise.

If you have an electronic device that helps you track your exercise intensity, talk to your prehab team member about how to use it.

## Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE) scale

The Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE) scale is a tool that lets you rate your level of intensity during your workout. The RPE scale is from 0 to 10, with 0 being no effort at all and 10 being a maximal effort (see below).

Your prehab team will work with you to determine what level on the RPE score you should aim for during your aerobic and resistance training sessions.

### Rating of Perceived Exertion – How hard are you working?

0	No exertion (resting, sitting)
1	Very light (little or no tiredness)
2	Fairly light
3	Moderate (comfortable, slightly faster breathing)
4	Somewhat hard (breathing deeper, light sweating)
5	Hard (breathing deeply at a comfortable level, general tiredness, sweating)
6	
7	Very hard (definite tiredness, breathing hard, heavy sweating)
8	
9	Extremely hard (extremely vigorous, cannot maintain for long)
10	Maximal exertion

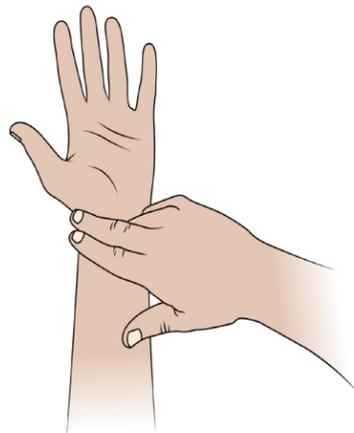
## Heart rate

Your heart rate is measured in beats per minute (bpm). As you exercise, your heart rate increases.

The prehab team may provide a “dose” of aerobic exercise that includes a range of heart rates to reach while you exercise. There are two easy ways to know your heart rate are to measure it (1) at your neck or (2) at your wrist.



**Measuring your heart rate at your neck:** Your carotid artery is in your neck. You can find it just below your jaw and on either side of your windpipe. Take your index and middle finger, and feel for the groove under your jaw until you feel a pulsing. Use the flat parts of your fingers rather than the fingertips.



**Measuring your heart rate at your wrist:** Your radial artery is in your wrist just below where your thumb meets your arm. Cup your hand loosely, and place your forefinger and middle finger in the small pocket where your thumb meets your wrist. Feel your wrist in this area until you find the steady beat.

When you find your pulse, count the number of beats you feel within 15 seconds. Multiply the number of beats you feel in 15 seconds by 4 to get your heart rate in beats per minute (bpm).

$$\text{bpm} = \text{beats in 15 seconds} \times 4$$

Now you can find out how hard your heart is working at any time to determine the intensity of your workout.

## Time

Time in the FITT principle refers to the amount of time you spend doing your exercises during each session and is usually described in minutes.

Your exercise prescription will be tailored to your current health, preferences, and goals. Your exercise prescription will often recommend a number of minutes your aerobic exercise should be per session. General guidelines recommend that we get 75 to 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise each week.

## Type

The type of exercise refers to the kind of exercise you choose so that you can reach your program goals. For example, brisk walking or jogging will build aerobic fitness, and lifting weights or using resistance bands will improve muscle strength and endurance.

Your prehab team will work with you to tailor your exercises to your health, your previous experience with exercise and physical activity, and your upcoming treatment. Some exercises will be general, meaning they focus on your overall aerobic or muscular fitness. Other exercises may be specific to the type of treatment you will be undergoing. These treatment-specific exercises might focus on strength or flexibility of a particular part of your body.

## Warm-ups and cool-downs

### Warming up

#### Why warm up?

Warming up means preparing your muscles for exercise by moving them in a way that is similar to how they may be used during the actual exercise. This prepares the body for exercise by gradually increasing your heart rate and blood pressure. Warming up also reduces the risk of injuring muscles.

### Cooling down

#### Why cool down?

Cooling down gradually reduces heart rate and blood pressure to prevent you from becoming dizzy or lightheaded. It also helps to remove muscle waste products that were produced during exercise and prepares the body to return to its resting state.

### How should I warm up.

A warm-up should be a gradual increase in exercise intensity, starting from rest and getting close to the intensity that your main workout will be. It should last somewhere between 5 and 10 minutes.

In your warm-up, move the same major muscle groups that you will use in your exercise session. Your warm-up might include walking, jogging in place, or a lighter version of your planned exercise (for example, doing the same exercises without resistance bands or weights). Your prehab exercise team member will describe an appropriate warm-up for you.

### How should I cool down?

A cool-down should be a gradual decrease in exercise intensity from how hard you were working during the main workout all the way to a near-resting state. Like the warm-up, it should last somewhere between 5 and 10 minutes.

In your cool-down, move the same major muscle groups that you used during your exercise session. Like the warm-up, your cool-down might include walking, jogging in place, or a lighter version of your planned exercise (for example, doing the same exercises without resistance bands or weights). A great way to end a cool-down is to do your flexibility exercises.

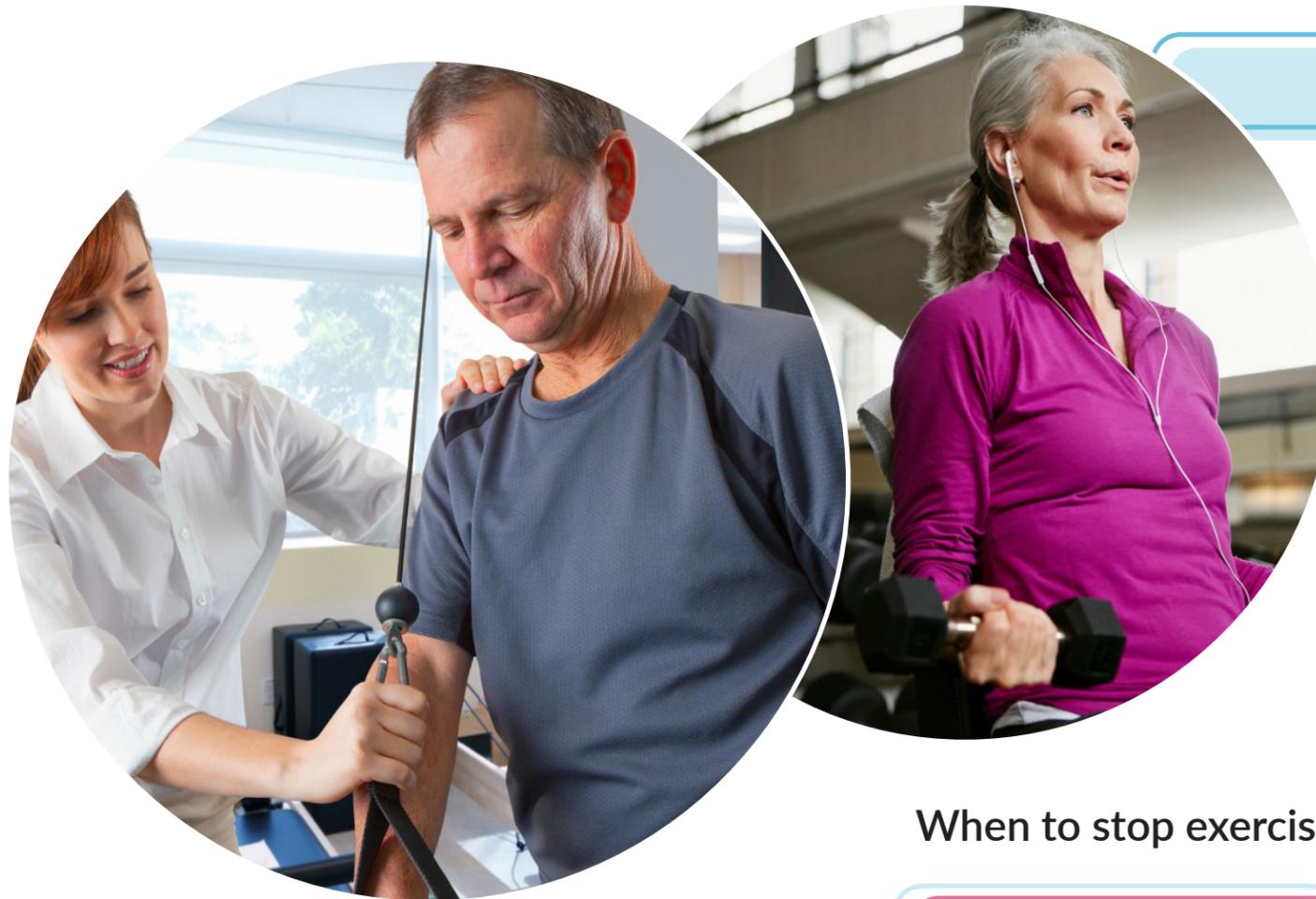


## Exercising safely

Your safety is very important when exercising. Because there are many types of aerobic and resistance training, the precautions you take to stay safe will depend on the activity that you choose.

Here is a list of general safety guidelines for most aerobic and resistance training activities:

- Exercise with a trainer, friend, or partner. They can help you if you get injured or need some support.
- Be aware of the proper technique for each exercise you are doing. Ask a professional (like your prehab team) to show you how to safely do exercises you are unfamiliar with. Many people hurt themselves when they do exercises with the wrong technique.
- Always train in a well-lit space. Most activities are hard to do in the dark and might cause you to fall and hurt yourself. If you are cycling outdoors at night, wear reflective gear so that motorists and other cyclists can see you.
- Wear appropriate clothing like loose-fitting clothes or fitted athletic clothing that let you release body heat and move freely. When exercising in cool weather, wear removable layers. Wear supportive footwear, like athletic shoes, and replace them as they wear out.
- Always carry or have access to water that can replace the water you lose through sweat. Getting enough fluids is very important. Try to drink about 250 to 500 mL of water in the hour before you start exercise and 125 to 250 mL for every 30 minutes of exercise.
- Check all of your equipment before using it. Look to make sure that the equipment is working properly and safely (for example, that the bands are not torn, the stability ball is inflated enough, and mat is not slippery). If you are securing resistance bands to a fixed object, make sure the object will not move and that you knot the band tightly.
- Wear protective equipment, like helmets and knee-pads, during any activity where you might fall or collide with something.
- Take time to rest between heavy workouts. You should let specific muscle groups rest for 48 hours between each resistance workout so that they can heal and become stronger.
- Remember – soreness after a workout is normal. Pain in your joints is not normal and can be a sign of an injury. Listen to what your body is telling you, and if you aren't sure, ask! If you experience pain or soreness that lasts longer than 3 to 4 days, contact our staff or see your doctor.
- Put your equipment away after use. Poorly placed equipment (like resistance bands, stability balls, and weights) can cause someone to trip, or the equipment might fall on someone and seriously hurt them.



## Remember to breathe!

To prevent potentially dangerous increases in blood pressure, it is very important to breathe during all your training exercises.

Breathe out (exhale) during the “work” phase of the exercise (for example, when you lift a weight or pull on a resistance band), and

Breathe in (inhale) during the “relaxing” phase of the exercise (for example, when you lower a weight or let a resistance band relax).

Proper breathing follows a simple 4-count pattern: lift “1, 2”, lower “1, 2”. Never hold your breath while exercising, and try to keep breathing in a steady rhythm.

## When to stop exercising

If you are having...

- Chest pain or discomfort
- Uncomfortable feeling of pressure, pain, squeezing, or heaviness (in the center of the chest, throughout the chest, or spreading to shoulder(s), arm(s), neck and back)
- Unusual shortness of breath
- Dizziness or loss of consciousness (fainting)

What to do

1. Stop and rest.
2. If the symptom doesn't go away after 2 to 4 minutes, call 911 or go to the emergency room.
3. If it does go away, but returns each time you exercise, see your doctor. These symptoms might be signs of something more serious

Our prehab team will create an exercise program just for you that is meant to be safe, but problems can still happen in rare cases. Be aware of some of the signs and symptoms of when to stop exercising.





## Resistance exercise equipment for home-based prehab

If you are doing home-based prehab, you can exercise either at a local fitness gym convenient for you or at your home. You can use any type of equipment that you have access to and that the prehab team has demonstrated or discussed with you.

If you are exercising at home, we may give you resistance bands, an exercise mat, and a stability ball. These pieces of exercise equipment will help you do a total body workout at the intensity you need to improve your strength and muscle development.

### Resistance band instructions

#### Do...

- make sure that the bands are not ripped
- make sure that the band is secured to the attachment (for example, under your feet when performing seated row)
- clean your bands with a soft cloth and warm, soapy water and let them dry before you use them (lay flat to dry)
- perform exercises slowly and in a controlled way to prevent them from snapping back at you

#### Don't...

- use the bands with any sharp objects (for example, jewelry), which increase the risk of tearing
- point the band toward the face
- overstretch the bands – never pull them more than three times their resting length
- keep your bands in direct sunlight or heat, which can make the bands brittle and cause them to break.



**Physical Activity Log**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Use this log so that you can track the exercises that you do. It will highlight your progress as well as inform your prehab team on how well the exercise prescription is tailored to your fitness.

Day	Aerobic Exercises			Resistance Exercises											
	Activity	Time	Intensity	Exercise	Volume	Intensity	Exercise	Volume	Intensity	Exercise	Volume	Intensity	Exercise	Volume	Intensity
Ex.	Brisk walking	30 min	RPE = 6/10 or HR = 110 bpm	Wall push-up	(e.g., Reps x Sets, time) 10 x 3	2 step away from wall	Standing arm curl	10 x 3	Green resistance band	Abdominal plank on knees	3 sets	30 sec per set	Shoulder Press	3 sets x 12 reps	10 lb dumb-bell
MON															
TUES															
WED															
THURS															
FRI															
SAT															
SUN															

## Chapter 2

# Nutrition prehab

## Nutrition prehabilitation

Eating foods that support your health is just as important as exercising. The nutrients you get from eating well give your body the energy and strength it needs to perform and recover after exercise.

Your nutritional needs can change as you get older, when you exercise, or because of health conditions or medical treatments. You may need to adjust what you eat and drink to meet your nutritional needs and prepare you for treatment, including surgery. Surgery can cause stress to our bodies and increase the amount of nutrients our bodies need for healing. And depending on the type of surgery, you might have problems eating because of changes in appetite, difficulty chewing, or difficulty swallowing. This is why it's important to eat well before surgery to build up a good reserve of nutrition. Eating a balanced diet can also help wounds heal faster and reduce the risk of complications after your treatment.

In this chapter, you will learn more about the different types of nutrients and the strategies you and your prehab team can use to make sure your nutrition is the best it can be before your treatment.

**IMPORTANT:** if you live with diabetes, kidney disease, or heart disease, consult a dietitian before reading further! Your nutritional needs might be very different.

### Key nutrients for prehabilitation

**Calories** are essential nutrients found in most foods. Calories give your body the energy it needs to function every day, and they help you regain lost weight or maintain your body weight. Carbohydrates (for example, bread, rice, pasta) and fats are high sources of calories.

**Protein** are essential nutrients found in animal products (meat, fish, eggs, dairy) and in seeds, nuts, and legumes like beans, peas, and lentils. Proteins are the building blocks of muscles and help preserve muscle strength, support muscle recovery after exercise, and support wound healing after surgery. Without protein, your body lacks the fuel to stay strong and healthy as you go through your treatment. Getting enough protein is especially important for those who are preparing for, or recovering from, surgery. It's important to eat enough protein to build up the protein reserves in your body before surgery.

**Vitamins and Minerals** are other nutrients that your body requires work properly and to support overall health. Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables will provide you with these nutrients.

## Help from your Prehab Program dietitian



Choosing a variety of foods and preparing balanced meals, including carbohydrates, proteins, and fats, will help you get important vitamins and minerals for your health. But it's not always easy to make sure your meals are as nutritious as they can be.

Sometimes you need help from a qualified health professional to help you choose the right type and amounts of food. The Prehab Program registered dietitian will work with you to help you:

- get the nutrients you need through your food,
- maintain a stable weight, and
- address other concerns related to nutrition.

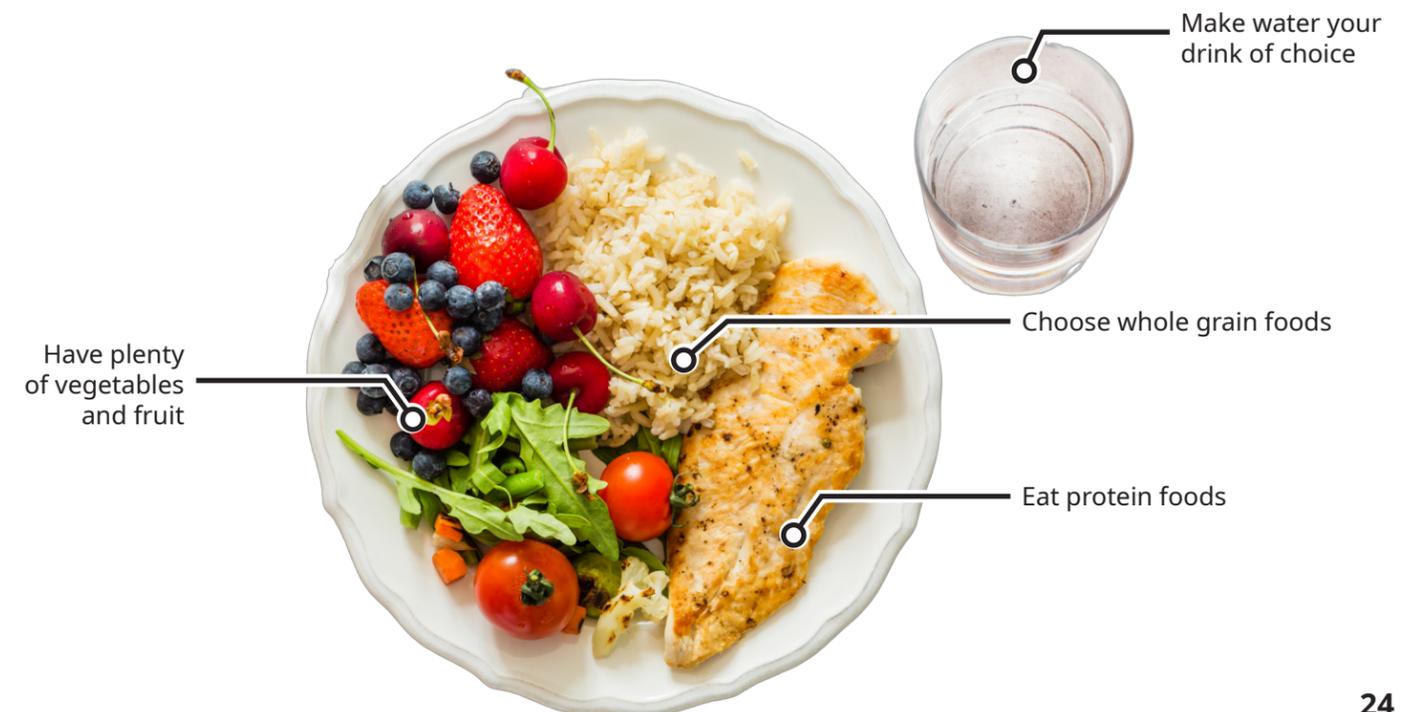
## Getting the nutrients you need before treatment

### Canada's Food Guide

Canada's Food Guide has some tips on how to make a nutritious meal:

- Take time to eat.
- Plan what you eat.
- Involve others in planning and preparing meals.
- Eat meals with others.
- Choose foods with unsaturated fats (like olive oil, fish/fish oils, nuts and seeds) instead of saturated fat (like butter and fatty cuts of meat).
- Prepare meals and snacks using ingredients that have little to no added salt, sugars, or saturated fat.
- Replace sugary drinks like pop or juice with water.

Canada's Food Guide suggests that a nutritious plate might look like the image below. You might choose different items for the portions, but the key point is that most of your plate should be fruits and vegetables. Protein foods and whole grains should each make up a quarter of your plate. This is a good starting point to see if you need to make any changes to what you eat or drink. If you have further questions, the Prehab Program dietitian can help you.



## Eat more fruits and vegetables

Canada's Food Guide suggests eating half a plate of fruits and vegetables because they are a good source of fibre, vitamins, and minerals. Here are some suggestions to help you eat more fruits and vegetables:

- There are many different fruits and vegetables. Choose the ones with the colour, texture, or taste that you prefer.
- Choose whole fruits and vegetables over juices. When fruits and vegetables are made into juice, their solid pulp is taken away, and that pulp has a lot of nutrients. If you find fruits and vegetables hard to chew, try blending them into smoothies, which are more nutritious than juices.
- Consider using frozen or canned fruits and vegetables. These are usually easier to prepare and often as nutritious as fresh options.
- Try fresh or dried fruit if you need a snack. Vegetables that you cut up and store in your fridge can also be great, quick snacks. Try celery, carrot, bell peppers, or cucumber with a protein food like hummus, peanut butter, or cheese.
- When cooking your vegetables, try steaming, baking or roasting. You can also experiment with spices, olive oil, and lemon juice to bring flavour to your dish.

Your Prehab Program dietitian and team members will advise you on how to include more fruits and vegetables into your diet in ways that will work for you. For more great ways to eat more fruits and vegetables, see Canada's Food Guide at [food-guide.canada.ca/](http://food-guide.canada.ca/)



## Eat your carbs!

Many sources of carbohydrates ("carbs") are packed with important vitamins and minerals that your body needs.

- Choose whole grains more often than more processed grains like white flour or white rice. Whole grains include foods like quinoa, whole grain bread, whole wheat pasta, brown rice, and oatmeal. Whole grains have more fibre, which helps keep you feeling full for longer, supports gut health (like the good bacteria in your intestines), and regulates bowel movements.
- Include carbohydrates at each meal and snack to maintain good energy levels throughout the day. Exercising uses energy, so it's important to replace the energy you use in your prehab exercises by eating carbohydrates.

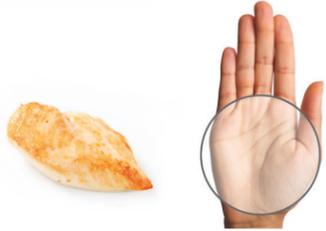
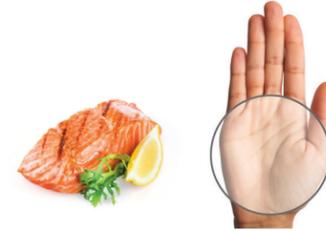


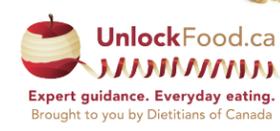
## Get enough protein!

Everyone has different nutritional needs. For many people undergoing surgery, more protein is often better. But if you live with a kidney condition, check with your registered dietitian or doctor before increasing the amount of protein you eat.

- Eat a variety of high-protein foods because these foods have other essential vitamins and minerals (for example, calcium in milk, and magnesium in beans and legumes) that help you build and maintain muscle.
- Include a high source of protein at each meal and snack throughout the day. Aim for 20 to 35 g of protein at each meal and snack to encourage muscle recovery and growth. Eating less than 20 g at each meal is a missed opportunity to build muscle, and eating more than 35 g does not help build more muscle.

**Meat and Alternatives:** Canada's Food Guide recommends 2 to 3 servings of Meat and Alternatives a day depending on your age and gender. Here's what a Food Guide serving looks like.

<p><b>Meat and Poultry</b> 2½ oz (75g) = Palm of hand</p> 	<p><b>Fish</b> 2½ oz (75g) = Palm of hand</p> 	<p><b>Peanut butter</b> 2 tbsp (30 mL) = 2 thumbs</p> 
<p><b>Nuts and seeds</b> 1/4 cup (60 mL) = Cupped hand</p> 	<p><b>Legumes</b> 3/4 cup (175 mL) = 1 fist</p> 	



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<http://www.unlockfood.ca/handyguide/>

## Common sources of protein

Food category	Serving size	Approximate protein content (g)
1. Meat (cooked) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beef, pork, lamb veal or wild game</li> <li>• Chicken, turkey, or duck</li> </ul>	3 oz (about the size of a deck of cards)	25
2. Fish or shellfish (Cooked) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tuna, salmon, sole, halibut</li> <li>• Shrimp, crab, lobster</li> <li>• Canned fish</li> </ul>	3 oz (1/2 can of tuna or salmon)	20
3. Beans and other legumes (cooked or canned) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lima beans, kidney beans, chickpeas, lentils</li> </ul>	1/2 cup	8
4. Soy products <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Soybeans</li> <li>• Tofu (firm)</li> <li>• Tofu (soft)</li> <li>• Soy milk</li> <li>• Tempeh</li> </ul>	1/2 cup 1/2 cup 1/2 cup 1 cup 1/2 cup	15 20 10 6 15g
5. Eggs and dairy products <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cottage cheese</li> <li>• Eggs</li> <li>• Skim milk powder</li> <li>• Yogurt (regular)</li> <li>• Yogurt (Greek or Balkan style)</li> <li>• Milk</li> <li>• Cheese</li> </ul>	1/2 cup 1 large 1/2 cup 3/4 cup 3/4 cup 1 cup 1 oz	5 16 13 8 15 9 4-9
6. Nuts and nut butters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nuts – almonds, peanuts, mixed nuts, pine nuts</li> <li>• Seeds – pumpkin, squash</li> <li>• Peanut butter</li> </ul>	1/4 cup 1/4 cup 2 tbsp	8 10 8
7. Protein supplements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skim milk powder</li> <li>• Protein powder</li> <li>• Protein shakes</li> </ul>	1/4 cup 1 scoop 1 bottle	9 15-25 20-30

Adapted from Oncology Nutrition, BC Cancer Agency (2012)

## Tips to increase protein



- Add grated or melted cheese to soups, mashed potatoes, vegetables, sauces, meat, and noodles.
- Use milk in place of water in hot cereals, soups, casseroles, or hot chocolate.
- Add yogurt or cottage cheese to fruits, soups, dips, or blended smoothies.
- Add hard-boiled eggs to salads, casseroles, soups, vegetables, potatoes, or sandwiches.

- Add leftover cooked meats to salads, soups, scrambled eggs, pasta, or casseroles.
- Sprinkle nuts and seeds on casseroles, salads, pastas, muffins, cookies, ice cream, or pudding.
- Spread peanut or almond butter on toast, fruit, muffins or crackers, or blend in milkshakes or smoothies.
- After you exercise, try to have a high-protein snack to help your muscles recover.

## Nutrition supplements and protein powder

You can also make your own nutrition supplement smoothie with a simple recipe:

## Nutrition supplements

Nutrition supplements are commercially made “milkshakes” that can help give you a boost of energy and protein in an easy-to-drink form. Brands like Ensure® or Boost® are common ones found in grocery stores and drugstores.

## BASIC SMOOTHIE

### Ingredients:

**1½ cups** whole milk or soy beverage

**1 cup** berries or chopped fruit, fresh or frozen

**½** banana, very ripe, or your choice of fruit

### Recipe:

1. Combine the ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth.
2. Add in more protein! Blend ½ cup plain 2% Greek yogurt into the basic smoothie. Greek yogurt is high in protein. Use a flavoured Greek yogurt for a sweeter smoothie.
3. Add in more calories! Blend in 1/4 ripe avocado, 1/2 cup of homogenized milk, or one tablespoon of oil.

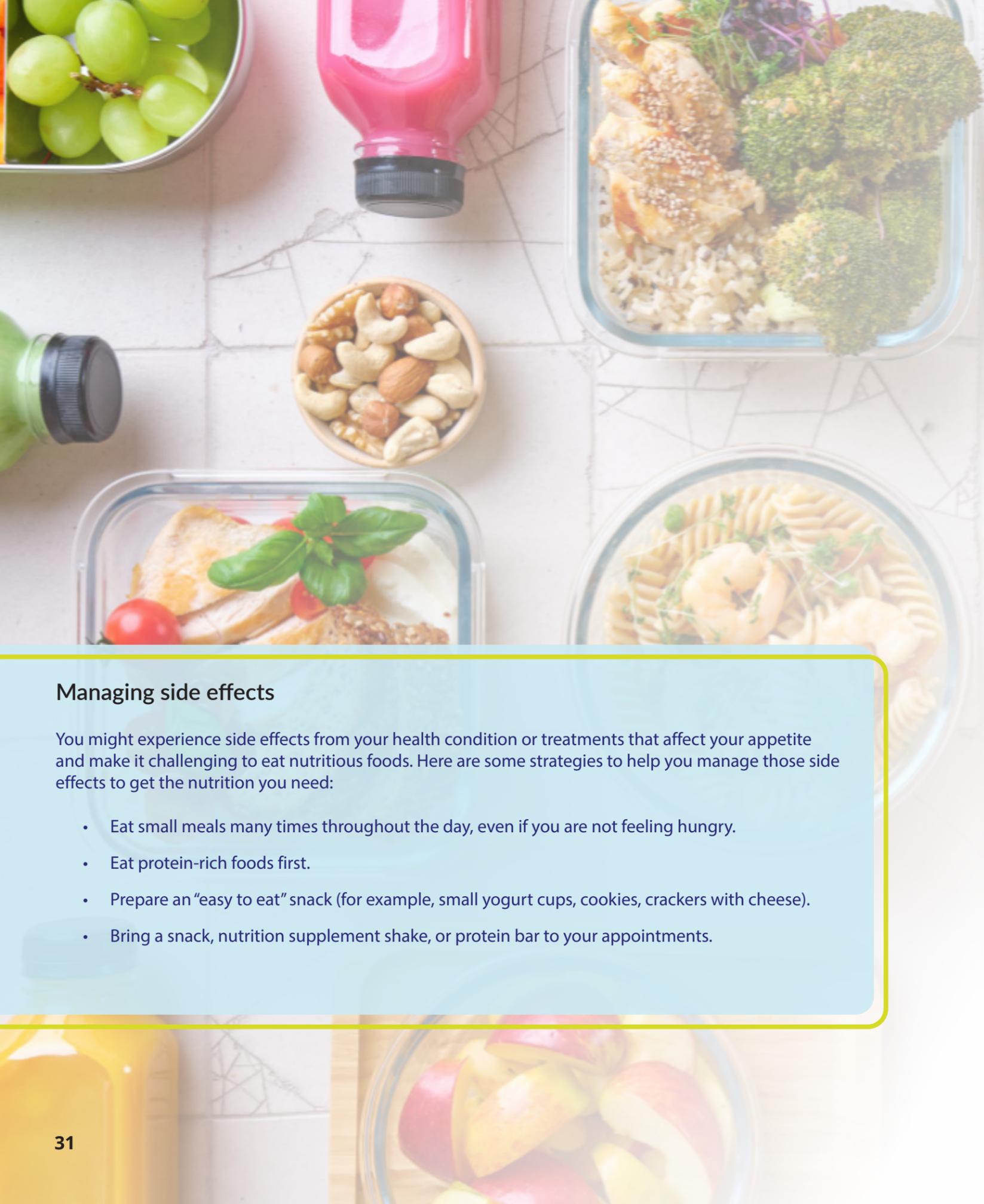
(Recipe courtesy of Susan Haines, RD)

## Protein powders

You can add plain protein powders – like whey protein, pea protein, or skim milk powder – to increase the protein content of foods. You can add protein powders to soups, smoothies, mashed potatoes, and even casseroles.



If you're unsure about how to use nutrition supplements or protein powder, or have other questions, ask for a referral to the prehab program dietitian.



## Managing side effects

You might experience side effects from your health condition or treatments that affect your appetite and make it challenging to eat nutritious foods. Here are some strategies to help you manage those side effects to get the nutrition you need:

- Eat small meals many times throughout the day, even if you are not feeling hungry.
- Eat protein-rich foods first.
- Prepare an “easy to eat” snack (for example, small yogurt cups, cookies, crackers with cheese).
- Bring a snack, nutrition supplement shake, or protein bar to your appointments.

## Losing weight on purpose

If you are planning to lose weight, or if you’ve been told to lose some weight before treatment, consult a registered dietitian first, like the one on your prehab team.

Losing weight too fast can put you at risk of not having enough protein and other nutrients before treatment. Your dietitian can help guide you through what a safe weight-loss plan may look like for you.



## Food diary: Knowing what you eat

A great way to know if you are eating a well-balanced diet that meets your nutritional needs is to use a food diary. A food diary captures information about what you eat and drink, as well as any supplements or vitamins you may take.

Your health provider or dietitian might use your completed food diary to assess your current nutrition and dietary needs. Completing a food diary can help your prehab team create a plan that better meets those needs.

### Food diary recording instructions

In the food diary, write down everything you eat and drink on a usual day. It may be best to choose two weekdays and one weekend day to record.

Pick days that are typical for your current eating patterns, and try to choose days that don't come one after another. For example, you could pick Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday.

For each day:

1. Record all the food and drinks you had in the last 24 hours. Give the following details:

- Type of food eaten: for example, chicken noodle soup, muffin
- Brand name: for example Campbell's, Lipton, Tim Hortons blueberry muffin
- Food or beverage characteristics:
- Colour: for example, green vs. yellow beans; white vs. whole wheat bread
- Fat content: % fat (for example, skim, 1%, 2%, or homo milk), leanness of meat (e.g. extra-lean ground beef), fat claims (e.g. "light", "low-fat"), was skin removed from poultry?
- Freshness: for example, fresh, frozen, canned, or dried?
- Other details: for example, 25% reduced sodium, "diet" products, etc.

2. Time of day you ate or drank

- Measure and describe the amount of food eaten as accurately as possible.
- Always estimate portions sizes of food after cooking.
- Use household measures to specify serving sizes.

1 cup = 250 mL = 8 fluid oz      1 tablespoon (tbsp) = 15 mL

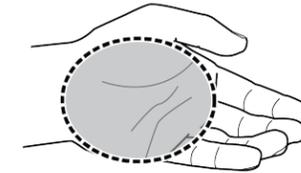
1 ounce (oz) = 30 g                      1 teaspoon (tsp) = 5 mL

FLOUR

- Count the number of food items, if practical. For example, 20 grapes, 15 baby carrots, 8 medium-sized shrimp, etc.
- For fluids, record amounts in fluid ounces (oz), millilitres (mL), or cups.
- Use food labels to estimate the amount you have eaten, based on weight or volume. For example, write down a 355 mL can of pop, ½ of a 60 g can of tuna, a 37 g granola bar, etc
- Use your hand to estimate portions sizes quickly:



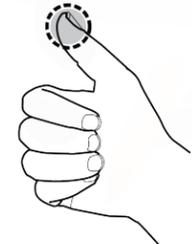
Fist = 3/4 cup (175 mL)



Palm = 2½ oz of meat (1 serving)



Whole thumb = 1 tablespoon



Thumb tip = 1 teaspoon

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For examples of estimating food portions, visit <https://www.unlockfood.ca/EatRightOntario/media/PDFs-new-website/Portions%20Toolkit/Handy-Servings-Guide-EN-v04-July-2018.pdf>

- Record if anything was added when preparing the food, like oil (list the specific kind), sauce, butter, margarine, or other condiments or seasonings.
- For combination dishes like lasagna, casseroles, chili, soups, or stews, describe the main ingredients. For example: "lasagna: lean ground beef (¼ cup per piece), mozzarella cheese (1 oz per piece), cottage cheese (1 oz per piece), ½ cup tomato sauce, 2 noodles, ¼ cup spinach."
- Include snack foods you have eaten. Remember to include candy, chips, cookies, popcorn, ice cream, and beverages like soft drinks, juice, coffee, or tea.
- Use the "Notes" column to record any other product information you can find (for example, "6 crackers: 80 calories, 2.5 g fat, 1 g fibre, 210 mg sodium").
- If you cooked the food yourself, also include the preparation method (for example, baked, fried, steamed).
- Include any supplements. Supplements include vitamins, minerals (iron, calcium), and protein powders. Record the brand, amount, reasons for taking the supplement, and how often you take the supplement.
- Write down any alcoholic drinks you had and how much you drank. This includes all wine, beer, and liquor.



# 3-Day Food Diary



Day 1 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time	Meal (breakfast, lunch, dinner, snack)	Food/Drink/Supplement Item	Amount	Details/Ingredients (nutritional info, additions, characteristics)	Notes (preparation method, supplement information)

Time	Meal (breakfast, lunch, dinner, snack)	Food/Drink/Supplement Item	Amount	Details/Ingredients (nutritional info, additions, characteristics)	Notes (preparation method, supplement information)

# 3-Day Food Diary



Day 2 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time	Meal (breakfast, lunch, dinner, snack)	Food/Drink/Supplement Item	Amount	Details/Ingredients (nutritional info, additions, characteristics)	Notes (preparation method, supplement information)

Time	Meal (breakfast, lunch, dinner, snack)	Food/Drink/Supplement Item	Amount	Details/Ingredients (nutritional info, additions, characteristics)	Notes (preparation method, supplement information)

# 3-Day Food Diary



Day 3 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time	Meal (breakfast, lunch, dinner, snack)	Food/Drink/Supplement Item	Amount	Details/Ingredients (nutritional info, additions, characteristics)	Notes (preparation method, supplement information)

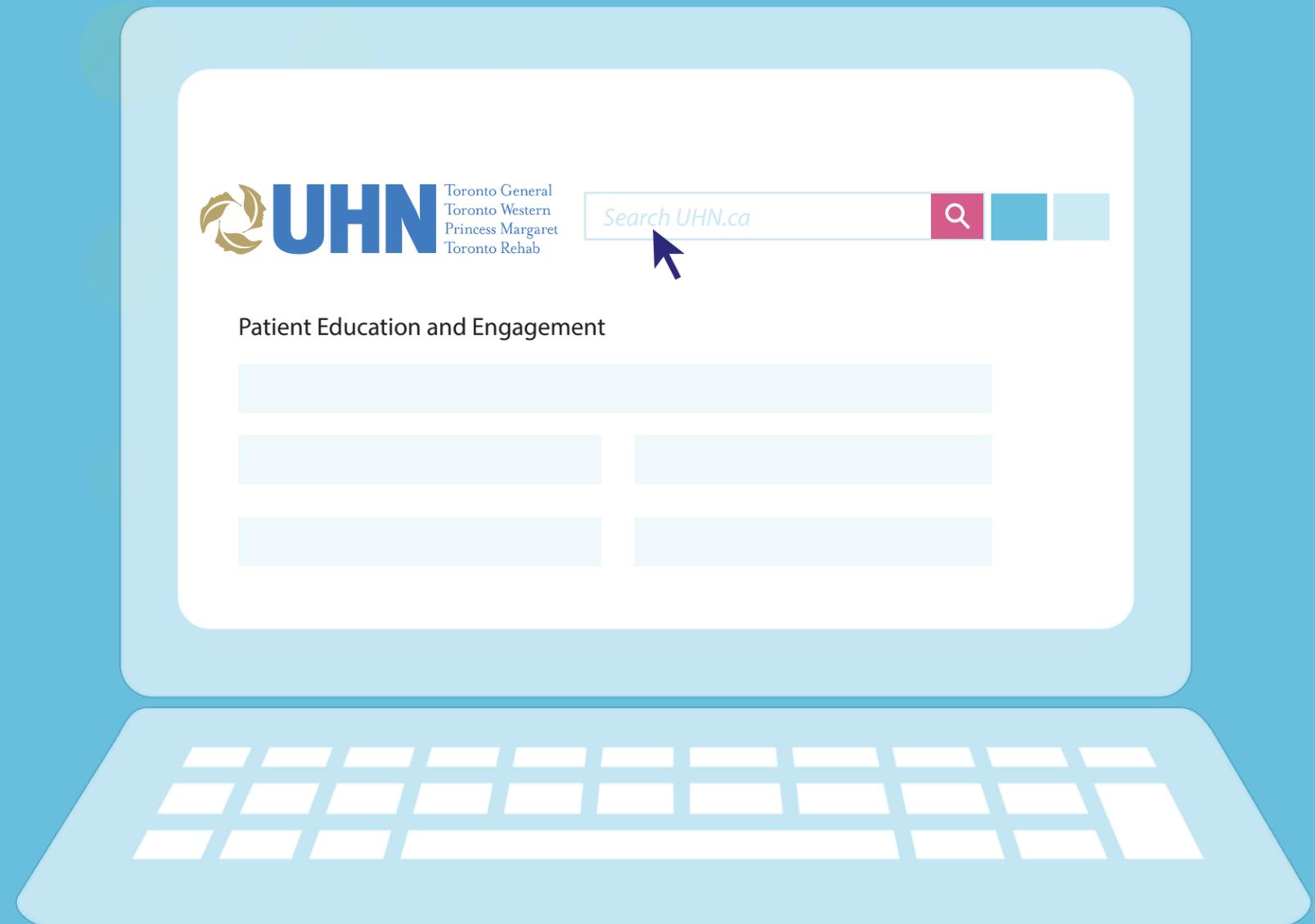
Time	Meal (breakfast, lunch, dinner, snack)	Food/Drink/Supplement Item	Amount	Details/Ingredients (nutritional info, additions, characteristics)	Notes (preparation method, supplement information)

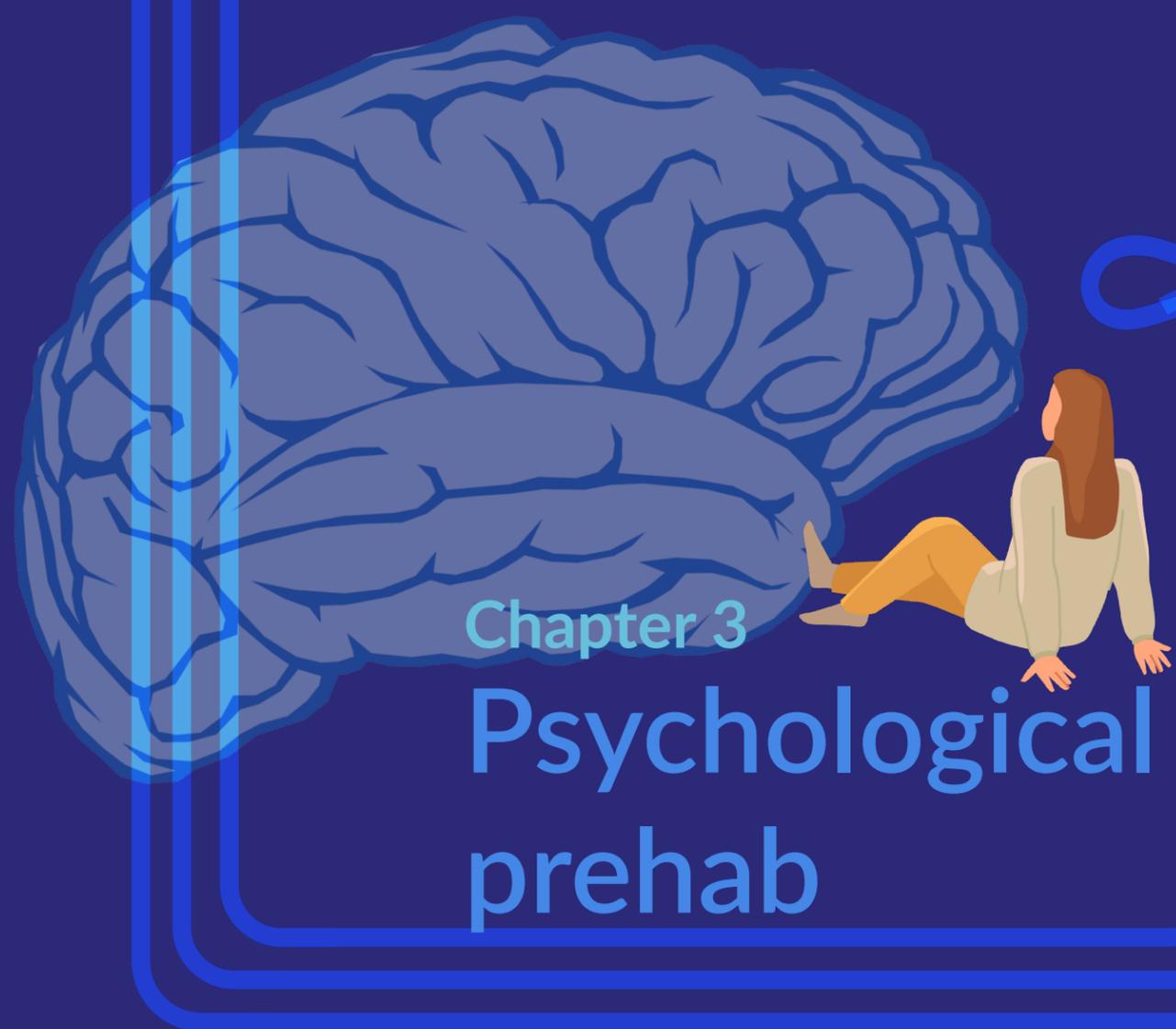
## Finding more information

Talk to the registered dietitian on your prehab team.

You can also find more information in these UHN pamphlets. Visit [www.uhnpatienteducation.ca](http://www.uhnpatienteducation.ca) and enter the title in the search box.

- How to Choose High Protein and High Energy Foods
- How to Choose Liquid Foods High in Protein and Energy
- Increasing Calories and Protein in Your Diet





Chapter 3

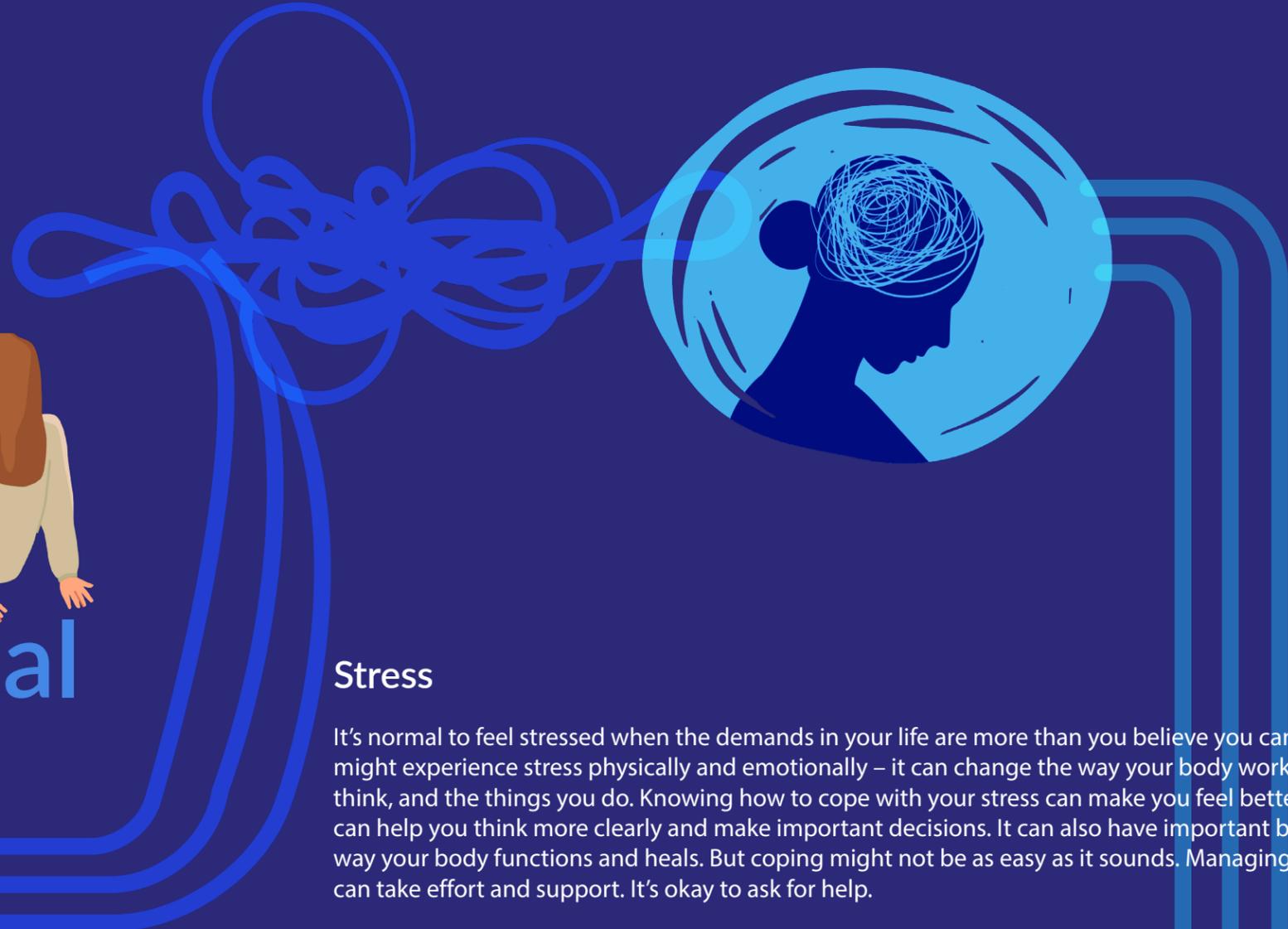
## Psychological prehab

# Psychological prehabilitation

To this point, we have mostly discussed prehab in relation to physical health. But prehab can do much more than prepare the body for treatment – it can also strengthen the mind and spirit. The stress-management part of prehab gives you techniques to reduce how strongly you react to stressors and help you manage challenges you can't control.

Maybe your stress levels are typically low, and you don't have to think too much about how to reduce stress or manage it effectively. But when you experience an illness, all of the stressors that can go along with that illness can take a toll. Even what might seem like small sources of stress, like going to countless medical appointments and managing new medications, can increase stress levels.

Learning techniques that help support relaxation, and mindfulness can help you manage stress and build resilience. The skills discussed in this chapter can help you manage the stress that comes with preparing for treatment.



## Stress

It's normal to feel stressed when the demands in your life are more than you believe you can handle. You might experience stress physically and emotionally – it can change the way your body works, the way you think, and the things you do. Knowing how to cope with your stress can make you feel better because it can help you think more clearly and make important decisions. It can also have important benefits to the way your body functions and heals. But coping might not be as easy as it sounds. Managing your stress can take effort and support. It's okay to ask for help.

If you have trouble coping, getting support from your friends and family is an important way to manage your stress. It's also okay to discuss stress with your health care team. In particular, the prehab team will focus on reducing your stress using some common and useful techniques.

## Stress and health after treatment

Research shows that some psychological characteristics are associated with better treatment experiences. For example, people who are optimistic, feel in control, and are confident in their ability to cope and manage their recovery may be more likely to have better surgical outcomes. In contrast, people with higher stress levels before treatment like surgery might have more complications, more pain, or a longer hospital stay.

Reducing stress as much as possible could help you get the most benefit from your treatment and help you recover more quickly. The goal of psychological prehab is to help you achieve a healthy mind that copes with the stresses of an upcoming treatment.

## Managing and reducing your stress

What stresses some people might not stress others, and how people react to stress can be very different. Some people will want to avoid a stressor by ignoring it so that it doesn't "bother them" during daily tasks. For others, stress might actively invade every aspect of their day, making it hard to function normally. Other people will want to vent their stress to others. People cope with stress in many ways, and coping strategies can change. But, for just about everyone, managing stress can be hard to do.

Psychologists, psychotherapists, and social workers are often the most qualified people to help you manage stress. Other health professionals, like nurses or psychiatrists, might also help you during emotionally challenging times. Sometimes your friends and family (including pets) can be the most helpful at reducing stress.

Your prehab team includes people who are specially trained in managing very stressful situations (for example, psychologists), as well as other team members who can help support your relaxation strategies.



### Tips for managing stress

The American Heart Association offers 3 useful tips to manage stress.

#### 1. Positive self-talk

Learn to shift negative thoughts to positive ones. For example:

Instead of saying...	...tell yourself
"I can't do this."	"I'll do the best I can. I've got this."
"Everything is going wrong."	"I can handle this if I take it one step at a time."
"I hate it when this happens."	"I know how to deal with this. I've done it before."
"I feel helpless and alone."	"I can reach out and get help if I need it."
"I can't believe I screwed up."	"I'm human, and we all make mistakes. I can fix it."

#### 2. Emergency stress stoppers

- Count to 10 before you speak or react
- Take a few slow, deep breaths until you feel your body unclench a bit.
- Go for a walk, even if it's just to the restroom and back. It can help break the tension and give you a chance to think things through.
- Try a quick meditation or prayer to gain perspective.
- If it's not urgent, wait until tomorrow to respond. This works especially well for stressful emails and social media trolls.

- Walk away from the situation for a while, and handle it later when things have calmed down.
- Break down big problems into smaller parts. Take one step at a time, instead of trying to tackle everything at the same time.
- Turn on some soothing music or an inspirational podcast.
- Take a break to pet the dog, hug a loved one, or do something to help someone else.

#### 3. Stress-busting activities

- Take 10 to 15 minutes to do something you enjoy:
- Make art – draw, colour, paint, or play a musical instrument.
- Work on a scrapbook or photo album to focus on good memories.
- Read a book, short story, or magazine.
- Meet a friend for coffee or a meal.
- Play a favourite sport like golf, tennis, or basketball.
- Do a hobby like sewing, knitting, or making jewelry.
- Play with your kids or pets – outdoors if possible.
- Listen to music or watch an inspiring performance.
- Take a stroll in nature.
- Take a relaxing bath.
- Meditate or practise yoga.
- Work in the garden or do a home improvement project.
- Go for a walk, run, bike ride, or something active to clear your head. Exercise can help relieve stress.

## Relaxation

Learning to relax will be the focus of psychological prehab in this program. Your prehab team will discuss several relaxation strategies to help you reduce and manage your stress.

Relaxation is the process or state of calming your body and mind, even if it is only for short periods during the day. When you are relaxed, or calmer, you may have the space in your mind to think more clearly about important issues. You might also find that you have more energy because you don't have to devote so many mental and physical resources to anxiety or worry.

There are many different strategies to achieve relaxation. They often include narrowing your focus to certain experiences in the world (like breathing or sounds), letting go of judgment about thoughts, being present (not thinking about the future or the past), and generally slowing down your thoughts and emotions.



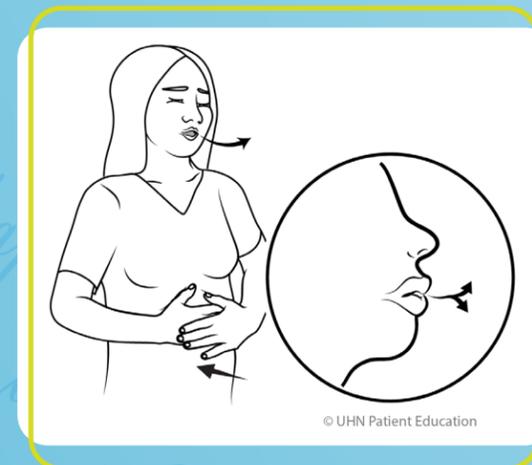
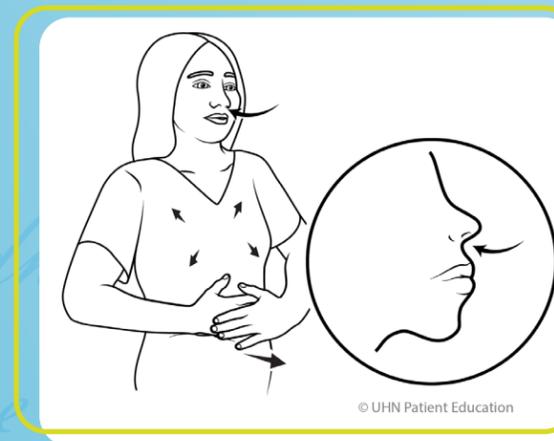
## Deep breathing

Probably the most common and simplest form of relaxation is deep breathing. You may find that when you feel stressed, your breathing becomes shallow and quicker, staying in the upper chest. But when you feel more relaxed, you are likely to take deeper and longer breaths that are in your chest and belly.

Controlling your breathing when you're feeling stressed can help make you feel more relaxed. It's easy to do without drawing attention to yourself, so you can do it wherever and whenever you need to – in the office, at the mall, while having meals with family or friends, or in a doctor's clinic or waiting room. It might help you calm down in stressful situations.

### Here are some tips to practise deep breathing:

- Make yourself physically comfortable. Maybe this means sitting, standing, or lying down. Or maybe you are doing a gentle activity (like walking or gardening). Whatever position you find yourself in when you need to relax, take some time to be physically comfortable.
- Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to take in as much air as you can when you breathe in, and let go all of the air when you breathe out.
- Breathe into your belly, as well as your chest. When you're "breathing into your belly," you're not actually taking air into your stomach. Rather, your diaphragm muscle contracts, expanding your chest and pushing your belly out to make room for more air. The feeling of breathing deeply into your belly region will make you feel more relaxed. A helpful strategy may be to put your hand on your belly to feel it rise and fall as you breathe.
- Count as you breathe, and try to slow down your breathing. Breathe in over 4 seconds. Try to breathe out at the same pace, or take an even longer time to breathe out, maybe 5 or 6 seconds.
- Do at least 3 cycles of deep breathing. In other words, breathe in and then out 3 times. Research has shown that as few as 3 deep breaths can help you feel calmer. If you can do more, you may find these longer periods of deep breathing helpful.
- Practice! You can do deep breathing when you're feeling stressed or just to maintain a relaxed state of mind. It might help you to choose times of the day to work on it so that you can make it a routine. Think about situations that are triggers for stress that you can recognize as an opportunity to practise your deep breathing.





## Meditation

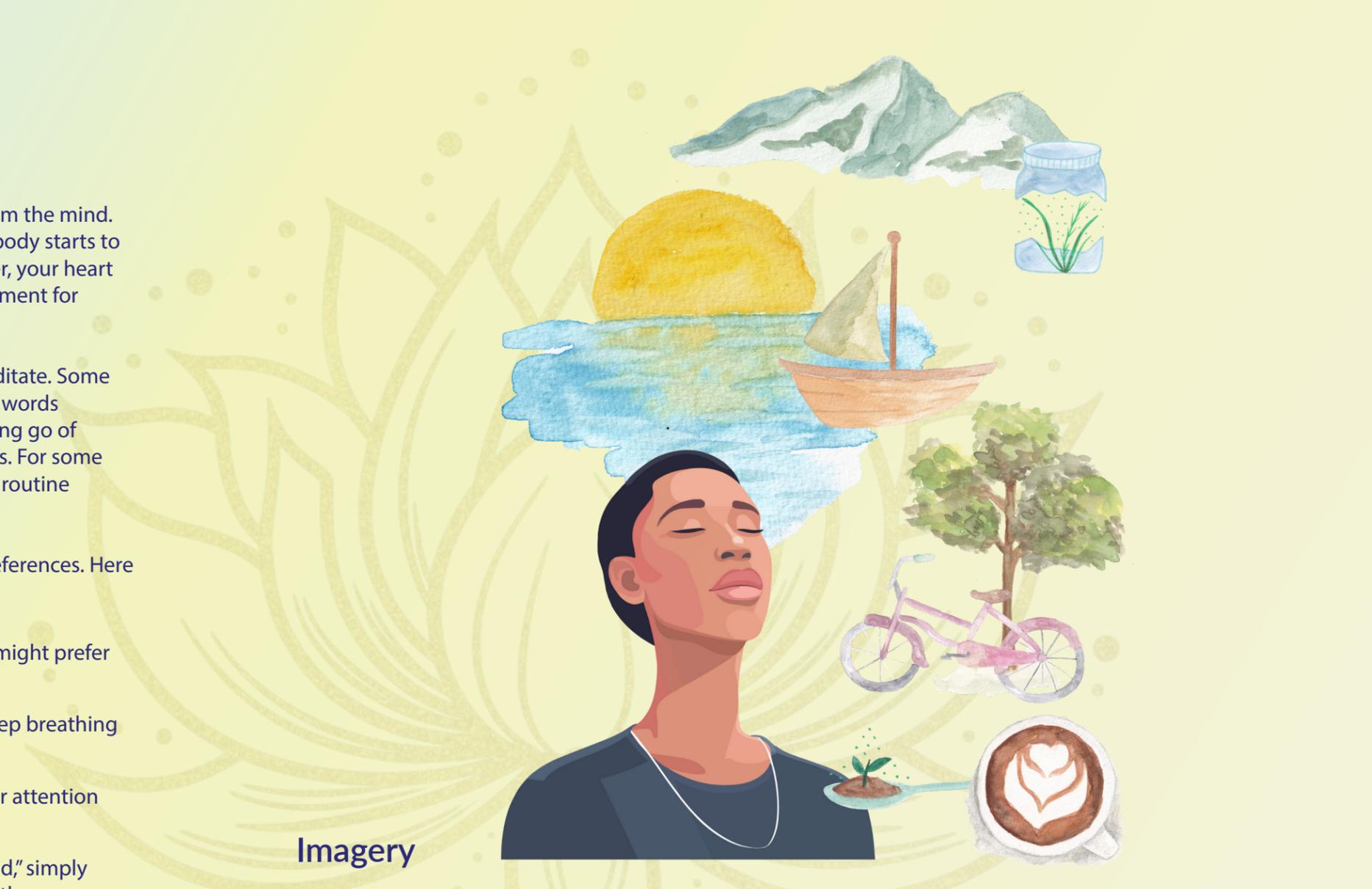
Meditation is a practice that helps calm the mind. When your mind “calms down,” your body starts to relax, your breathing becomes deeper, your heart rate slows, and you create an environment for rejuvenation and recovery.

There are many different ways to meditate. Some approaches to meditation will focus on bringing your attention to the present by repeating words or sounds, or by thinking about your breathing. Other types of meditation may include letting go of thoughts or sensations, or simply stopping your judgment of those thoughts and sensations. For some people, prayer might be a way they practise meditation. The key to successful meditation is routine practice, which often means choosing a form or approach that works well for you.

Your prehab team will also help you create a routine practice that fits your schedule and preferences. Here are some tips for meditating:

- Find a quiet, comfortable place to be still where you can be free of distractions. You might prefer sitting or lying down, but the key is to be comfortable.
- Close your eyes, or relax your gaze, and focus on your breathing. Use some of the deep breathing techniques described above.
- Try to “empty your mind” of thoughts, and if a thought re-enters your mind, turn your attention back to deep breathing.
- Sometimes distracting thoughts are persistent. If you find it hard to “empty your mind,” simply reduce judgment of those thoughts and let them come and go without focusing on them.
- You might find it helpful to repeat some words or sounds that are gentle and calming – such as “I am calm” or “Om.”
- Meditation is a skill and needs practice. It’s not easy to slow your mind down when you’re under stress, but it can help you feel better. Take time to practise it, and be patient with yourself as you learn this new skill.
- There are many free meditation video and audio resources available on the internet or YouTube. Try search terms like “guided meditation” or “mindfulness meditation” to find videos where an instructor helps you through the meditation process.
- There are also great meditation apps that you might enjoy. Check out the UHN Patient & Family Libraries’ list of mobile apps for ideas

[https://www.uhn.ca/PatientsFamilies/Health\\_Information/Patient\\_Family\\_Education/Libraries/Pages/mobile\\_health.aspx](https://www.uhn.ca/PatientsFamilies/Health_Information/Patient_Family_Education/Libraries/Pages/mobile_health.aspx)



## Imagery

Imagery, or visualization, is kind of like daydreaming with a bit of structure and purpose. It is meant to have you think about a scene, place, or thing that makes you feel at ease, happy, and relaxed – a place where you are comfortable letting go of your stress and worry. You can choose whatever thing or place you wish to imagine. Maybe it’s a beach, a mountaintop, or a dock overlooking a lake. Or maybe it’s the view from your window or porch, or your favourite flowers in the garden. Whatever you choose, it should be something that brings you peace.

Here are a few tips for practising imagery to become more relaxed:

- Find a quiet place where you can sit or lie comfortably and close your eyes.
- Picture yourself in that peaceful place, focusing on your favourite details of it. See your surroundings vividly – just as if you were there.
- Think about the sounds and smells of that peaceful place. Totally immerse yourself in that scene with as many sensations as possible.
- Practise deep breathing as described above. Relax in your peaceful place and enjoy a brief mental vacation.

## Mindfulness

Mindfulness refers to being aware of your experiences, moment-to-moment, including what you are thinking, feeling, hearing, smelling, seeing, and touching. Being mindful means not judging your thoughts or feelings, thinking that they are “wrong” or “bad.” It means not dwelling on the past or worrying about the future. It simply means being present in the here and now.

When our lives become busy or challenging, it’s hard not to think about what led us to this situation, or what might happen to us in the future. Being mindful creates moments or times where we allow ourselves to just be, without expectations. Mindfulness practice has been well-researched. Routine practice has been shown to help reduce fatigue, depression, and feelings of stress while improving sleep and overall quality of life.

Being mindful includes 3 main strategies:

- 1. Intention:** Being mindful is purposeful. It means you are making the choice to observe the present moment.
- 2. Attention:** At the heart of mindfulness practice is being attentive to your thoughts and environments. This attention doesn’t necessarily mean changing those thoughts or forcing yourself to think about something specific. Instead, it means gently redirecting your thoughts to the present experience.
- 3. Attitudes:** Thoughts will come and go, and you might not feel in control of them. You might not be able to control what you are thinking of, or when you are thinking about them, but you can try to control how they make you feel by having a non-judgmental attitude about your thoughts. During mindfulness practice, you will become more accepting of the thoughts and experiences you have. This change, in turn, creates a more accepting and compassionate attitude toward yourself.

Your prehab team will help you choose a mindfulness strategy that works for you. Typical mindfulness sessions often include practices used in other relaxation techniques. For example, you might do the following when practising mindfulness:



Find a quiet and calm place to sit or lie down where you won’t be interrupted or distracted.

Choose a focal point for your practice – often, this focal point is your breathing and the sensations of air flowing in and out of your body.

Let go of the meaning of the thoughts that go through your mind and return your focus to your focal point. As you learn to become more mindful, this shift in your focus – for example, away from something that is bothering you and back to your breath – will become more gentle and less abrupt.

Mindfulness sessions can be brief (for example, 3 minutes), or much longer (for example, 20 minutes or up to 1 hour). You can also practise being mindful while being active, exercising, or eating. For example, you might notice the gravel crunching under your foot when you walk, choose to concentrate on a specific muscle contraction while weight training, or pay attention to how many times you chew each bite while eating. Mindfulness apps can also help guide you through sessions. For help finding reliable apps, check out the UHN Patient and Family Libraries’ guidelines on choosing a mobile app.





# You can do it!

Becoming a healthier version of you does take time and effort, and these can be barriers to engaging in exercise, healthy eating, or stress reduction techniques. But for them to work, they must be done – routinely!

## Finding the right motivation

To reach your goals for healthy activity, nutrition, and relaxation before treatment, you must find the motivation to get started and persist until you have your treatment. Eating well, exercising, and maintaining low stress levels are important after treatment, too, so think about how you can make these practices routine over the long term.

Here are some ways to stay motivated throughout your prehab program:

- Start with small steps. You can't change your physical and mental fitness on the first day. Gradually build your practice over the weeks before your treatment with as much as you are able to and with the support of your prehab team.
- Focus on enjoying the experience – the people, the movements, the environments, and the feelings that come with exercising, shopping for healthy food, eating with friends and family, and finding time to focus on being relaxed.
- Reward yourself for a job well done. It may be as simple as sometimes enjoying your favourite dessert, or taking a day off to recover after several heavy days of exercise.
- Surround yourself with people who support your prehab program and try inviting them to participate in your healthy activities with you.
- Visualize success: Take a moment to close your eyes and imagine yourself engaged in new, positive health habits (like walking and enjoying the weather). Picture yourself reaching your goals and enjoying the rewards of a healthier, more active lifestyle before surgery and long after. This kind of visualization can be a powerful tool for getting through the rough times and building motivation, self-confidence, and commitment.
- Monitor your progress with the logs in this guide. Identify areas that you excel in and areas that could use a little more effort.
- Be gentle with yourself. If you push yourself too hard, you may not enjoy the experience that you might normally when you are simply being active.
- Don't "should" yourself! For example, instead of saying "I should exercise," say "It would be better for me if I went for a walk today because I could use some fresh air."



## Getting a little help from others

Making even small, positive changes to your lifestyle can be hard. You won't have to do it alone – your prehab team is here to help!

You might also find that social support from friends and family helps make the activities enjoyable and sustainable. Invite your family, friends, and co-workers to join in your exercise, healthy eating challenges, and finding time to be mindful and relaxed. Maybe they are waiting for someone to start these behaviours with, too! Their support could be as simple as giving you encouragement and reinforcing your attempts to change your habits.

Here are some people you might want to discuss your prehab program with to see how they can help you:

**Spouse or partner:** Your spouse or partner is likely to be one of the most significant people in your life. To gain support, try to include them in your healthy behaviours. For example, take an exercise break together, shop for healthy food together, or take time to be quiet and relax together.

**Children:** Look for chances to play with children in your family. Playing with them also gives you time to chat with them and get to know more about them. Their energy will get you moving, too!

**Friends or neighbours:** Some people find it easier to make behaviour changes if they make a commitment to another person. Maybe you can arrange to take your early-morning walk with a neighbour, create an accountability report for eating your fruits and vegetables, or join a yoga or tai chi class with someone to help you relax while being active.

## Fitting it in

You have a very busy time ahead of you. You likely have a treatment start date, and you have to get many things in order before you have your treatment. You might also have to plan to take time off work or other obligations after treatment. It's normal to feel overwhelmed.

On the other hand, you might think of this as a perfect time to focus on a priority in your life – your health! Investing in your health so that you can improve your treatment experience is time and energy well spent.

To make it easier to introduce different healthy behaviours in your life, it may help to think about how to make them part of your lifestyle. Here are a few suggestions on how to accomplish your prehab goals:

- **Schedule it in.** Set aside some time every day to participate in your prehab. Whether it's something active, like a walk around the office to stretch your legs, meal planning with your prehab nutrition goals in mind, or planning two 10-minute relaxation breaks. Schedule prehab into your life and make it a priority that you make sure you do every day.
- **Make some simple travelling rules to get more exercise in your day.** Take the stairs whenever you need to travel 2 or 3 floors up or down, or walk whenever your drive takes less than 10 minutes. Plan to park farther from the office, and put your walking shoes in the car the night before.
- **Choose helpful hobbies.** During your leisure time, plan activities that can help you with your prehab goals. For example, enjoy a walk, bike ride, wheelchair tour, or scooter ride around your neighbourhood, or join a sports team or walking club. Go apple or blueberry picking so that you can eat healthy snacks while staying active. Try yoga or tai chi to relax while improving your fitness.



## Facing your health foes – with our help!

Do daily changes in your schedule disrupt your plan for exercise? Do projects at work take over your time to plan for and eat healthy meals? Is it impossible to find a quiet space to relax?

These are common barriers to health behaviours, but you can make a plan to overcome them. Your prehab team will work with you every step of the way toward your goal of a healthier and happier you.



[www.uhn.ca/prehab](http://www.uhn.ca/prehab)