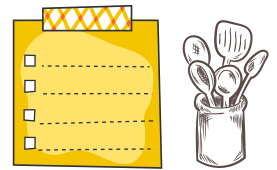


Tips for adjusting to the food handling guidelines during treatment

1) Plan your meals & grocery list

- Write your child's planned meals as a menu on a poster or whiteboard to help your child know what to expect at each meal. This can help to reduce both meal preparation and meal stress.



- Stock a mix of frozen and fresh products to shorten time required to prepare a nutritious meal.



Tip: The freezing process helps to retain the nutritional value of fruits and vegetables at its peak.

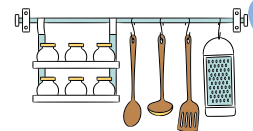
Did you know? A smelly dish cloth is a sign of unsafe bacterial growth. Disinfect them in chlorine solution or heat for 2 minutes in the microwave oven.

Scan for more tips:



2) Check out your kitchen equipment

Kitchen items that often become contaminated include can openers, cutting boards, countertops, dish cloth, sink drains, refrigerator and blenders.



- Be sure to wash all items after use with soap and water.
- Use a clean dish cloth daily. Dry thoroughly after use to prevent germs from breeding.
- Wipe all surfaces with warm soap and water to remove germs, dirt, and food debris.
- Clean your fridge thoroughly from time to time.



3) Continue to eat as a family



Having to adhere to food safety guidelines does not mean your child has to eat different food from other family members. In fact, eating together has been shown to build positive eating behaviour through encouraging children to try new food and observing social eating patterns.

Instead of eating separately, take extra precautions, such as washing hands with soap before and after meals, consuming food within 1 hour of preparation and having serving spoons.



Coping with emotions (Parents/Caregivers)

When a child is diagnosed with cancer, parents and caregivers may experience a confusing mix of emotions throughout the treatment, such as shock, anger, fear, sadness, guilt, disbelief and anxiety. While your child needs your support, it is equally necessary to take care of yourself and your emotions during this difficult journey.

Here are a few suggestions for managing emotions:

1) Understanding emotions

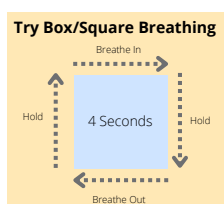
- Try to identify and understand the emotions and feelings that you are experiencing. This allows you to become aware of triggers, so as to gain insights on how to respond in helpful ways. Managing emotions helps individuals make better decisions, big or small.
- Did you notice any physical sensations such as fast heart-rate, headache, tension in the stomach?

What may have triggered the emotions? Have you felt this way before? What had helped you to feel better previously?



3) Take a short break whenever possible. Do something relaxing and something that you enjoy

- For example, go out for a brief walk, slow down and enjoy a cup of coffee or listen to music.
- Engage in a relaxing activity like slow breathing; *You may do a box/square breathing*



- You may also use mindfulness apps such as Smiling Mind and Headspace, or web resource like Mindline.sg to help manage emotions.

2) Talk to someone you can trust and who can provide a listening ear

Some people find it helpful to talk about their fears and anxieties to close friends and family, a support group or a healthcare professional

- *Relatives and friends often provide comfort and understanding. At the same time, while some individuals mean well, their comments may not always be helpful. Do speak with members of the healthcare team for help, if you believe that you are in such a situation.*
- Even if the difficulties cannot be solved by the other person, you may wish to tell them you want to express your thoughts and feelings, but are not expecting them to help solve the problem.
- You may also find it helpful to talk to other parents of children going through the same treatment



4) Remind yourself and your family members that no one is to be blamed

- As difficult as it is to accept, you may never know what caused your child's cancer.
- *If friends or family blame anyone for the cancer diagnosis, it is important to remember that this may not be correct. They are likely trying to make some sense of the situation, whatever their reasoning may be. Do speak with your healthcare team about these feelings of guilt or blame, in order to gain a better understanding of your child's illness.*

If you have been experiencing ongoing sadness and anxiety, hopelessness or feeling increasingly overwhelmed, do let your healthcare team or CCF social worker know. They will help you to get in touch with our psychologists who are here to support you and your child through this difficult journey.

