

## **Head and Neck or Chest Radiation – Eating Suggestions**

Radiation therapy to the head and neck area frequently results in inflammation of the lining of the mouth and throat (mucositis). You may find that it's difficult or painful to chew and swallow. Also radiation therapy may result in loss of taste and decreased production of saliva. All these potential side effects may make eating a challenge. Some of the following food choices may help to make eating more comfortable and maintain your nutrition during therapy:

### **Good Choices**

Baby food  
Cooked cereals  
Cottage Cheese  
Creamed soups  
Custards, puddings, gelatin  
Fruits such as bananas, applesauce, watermelon, or canteloupe  
Fruit nectars (apricot, pear)  
Herbal teas (chamomile)  
Macaroni and cheese  
Mash potatoes  
Milk shakes, ice cream, sherbet, popsicles  
Soft-boiled or scramble eggs  
Yogurt  
Cooked foods or meat pureed in a blender with gravy, mild sauce or broth added.  
Nutrition supplements e.g. Ensure, Boost, Resource, Carnation Instant Breakfast. Water or other decaffeinated beverages

### **Foods to Avoid**

Caffeinated beverages  
Citrus fruits and juices (orange, grapefruit, lemon)  
Pickles  
Raw vegetables  
Raw fruits (unless ripe and soft as above)  
Rough and dry foods (pretzels, popcorn, toast, chips, crackers, nuts)  
Salty or spicy foods, such as chili, peppers  
Tomatoes

### ***Also Don't Smoke, Chew Tobacco or Drink Alcohol***

**Additional Helpful Hints:** Foods that are cold or served at room temperature are better tolerated than hot foods. Eat small, frequent meals rather than large servings. Also cut food into bite-sized servings.