



Radiation Therapy and Change in Taste

放射線治療與味覺改變(英文)

After the radiation therapy, the microvilli of taste bud cells are damaged while the secretion of saliva is reduced. When the therapy dose reaches 2,000 cGy, part of the tastes such as bitterness and saltiness will be lost first while the taste of sweetness is less affected. Such loss of taste will start to appear in 2~3 weeks after the head and neck receive radiation therapy, which eventually recovers in 3 weeks to 3 months after the therapy.

- Patients can try food and drinks which they did not eat or drink before.
- Brush the teeth and use mouthwash often to keep oral hygiene. Use tea, salty water or soda water as mouthwash to clean the taste bud and improve the taste for food.
- If the patients do not have oral mucositis or oral ulcer, add acid to food. For example, lemonade, citrus and vinegar. Or drink acidic juice or drinks, chew gum or suck on hardened candy and popsicles to stimulate saliva secretion.
- Dry mouth will change the taste of food inside the mouth and hence food that is too dry will change taste. Use gravy, soup or seasoning packet to add the moisture of food.
- Eat vegetable and creamy soup prepared from vegetable. Drink more water before the meal and between meals.
- Cancer patients have intensified sensitivity to bitterness and should avoid eating bitter food such as bitter melon, bok choy and mustard. Use capsule or rice paper package for medication to reduce the vomiting caused by bitterness.
- Patients have wear sensitivity against sweetness and sourness. Use sugar or lemon to intensify the sweet and sour taste while try different sauces, lemon, salad, or wine to enhance the taste of food and try different types of food.

- Build up dining atmosphere to advocate appetite: For example, the aroma of food and fragrance of the environment will stimulate the nose while playing the easy music preferred by patients will enhance listening enjoyment. Exquisite utensils, elegant dining environment and change of food will stimulate the vision and help patients eat under cozy atmosphere.
- Refrigerated or frozen food can sometimes change the taste of patients.
- Eat protein-food with less smell such as chicken, tofu and egg.
- Choose milk and drinks with high protein and multiple vitamin and minerals. Eat multiple small meals.

若有任何疑問·請不吝與我們聯絡
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