



# What Should Myeloma Patients Eat After a Transplant?

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**Andrew Schorr:**

Post-transplant—and this may be for people who are on these two, three, four drug combinations now, for myeloma—what are you recommending now, for a healthy diet? We're doing some recipes on our website and people say try this, try that, but what are you recommending so that people can regain their strength or be as strong as they can, because they're probably getting some ongoing medicine?

**Alexa Welch:**

Yeah. So, appetite usually is kind of slow to come back after transplant. I do hear from my patients who have left and then either come back for a second transplant or are here from our outpatient dietician that works with them. That going home just helps your appetite too, being able to eat your own food in your own home, helps a lot.

Usually, as soon as appetite comes back patients are able to kind of eat more back to normal, back to three meals a day instead of snacking throughout the day. Recovering, honestly, is still just adequate calories, adequate protein so that they're still not losing weight.

I still never encourage weight loss even after transplant is done. Because that can be muscle loss and can affect your strength overall. And so, we want you to not be losing weight after transplant as well. And then in general, I do a food safety education with patients before they leave the hospital.

So, making sure—because after transplant it means that someone's still not perfect and we want to make sure that we're eliminating as much bacteria from the food that you're eating so that that doesn't cause any issues. You don't get any foodborne illnesses. So, we go over that kind of stuff.

But besides the food safety and then adequate calories, adequate protein, weighing themselves, making sure they're not losing weight, that's pretty much it. We just want you to stay strong and make sure you're eating well and then once you are feeling a little bit better, focusing again back on that balanced nutrition. So, eating from all the food groups and getting your fruits and veggies in and all that.

**Andrew Schorr:**

One last question for you now—so there are these products you can get at the supermarket—I don't know the different brands, Ensure and I'm sure there are other brands, high calorie—do you recommend that to people if they're not eating a plateful of food?

**Alexa Welch:**

Yes, absolutely, especially when they're in the hospital and their appetites are bad they're not eating very much food or they can't force down solids. Sometimes liquids do go down better. We use Ensure here. That's just who our contract is through, but Boost is an equivalent, Equate or the Walmart brand makes their own, that's an equivalent. Costco and Sam's both have their own.

They all essentially serve the same purpose, which is higher calorie, higher protein in a smaller amount. And so, you're not again having to force-feed yourself all day long when you don't feel well.

I would say those are indicated again when your appetite's not very good or you're having issues with nausea and vomiting and maybe that's the only thing that stays down. But once your appetite is back and you're eating better, those aren't really necessary as soon as you're able to maintain your weight on just food.

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