

Unite to nourish: Holiday eating for cancer survivors

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November 20, 2025



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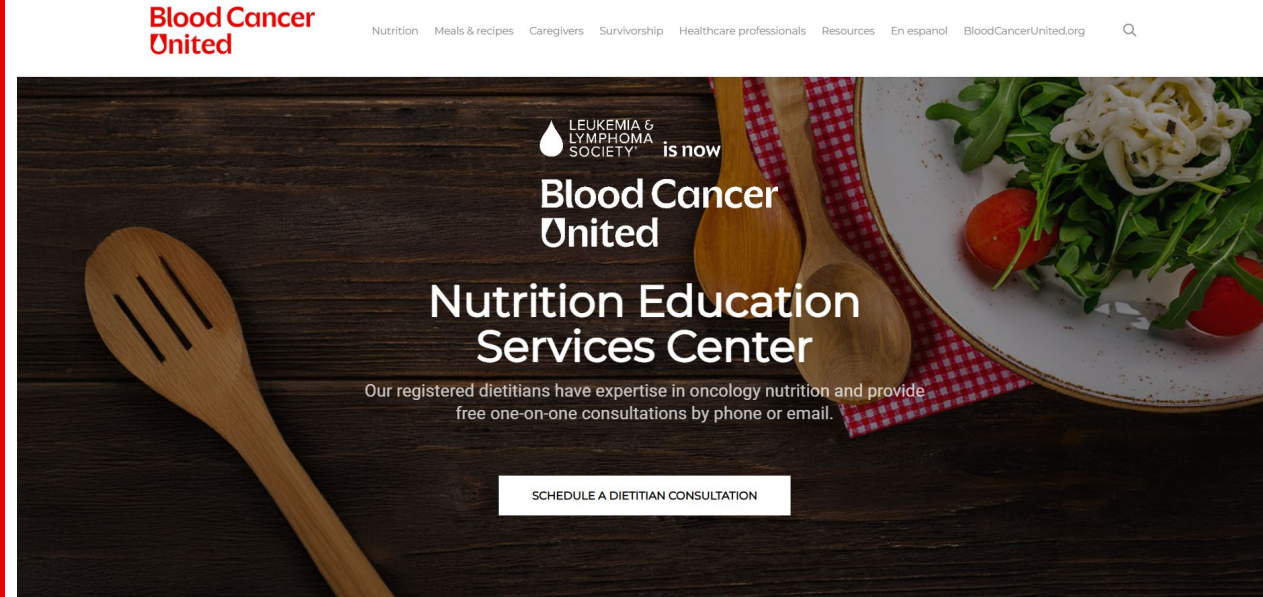
Agenda

- Introduce Nutrition Education Services Center
- Learn how to eat well through the holiday season
- Explore recipes and cooking tips
- Discuss holiday strategies to manage side effects
- Share tips to manage holiday events
- Q&A and share additional Blood Cancer United resources



Blood Cancer United Nutrition Education Services Center

BloodCancerUnitedNutrition.org



Disclaimer for today's presentation

Blood Cancer United offers the Nutrition Education Services Center for information purposes only. It is not intended to substitute for the advice of your healthcare team or provide medical diagnosis, treatment or therapy. Please seek the advice of your healthcare team before making any changes to your medical plan, diet or physical activity.



Heather Knutson MS, RD, CSO, LD
Registered Dietitian

Poll #1

What is your favorite pie to eat during the holidays?

- A. Apple
- B. Berry
- C. Pecan
- D. Pumpkin
- E. All the above
- F. I prefer something else

How do I eat
healthy
throughout
the holidays?

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“Honor the
holiday.”

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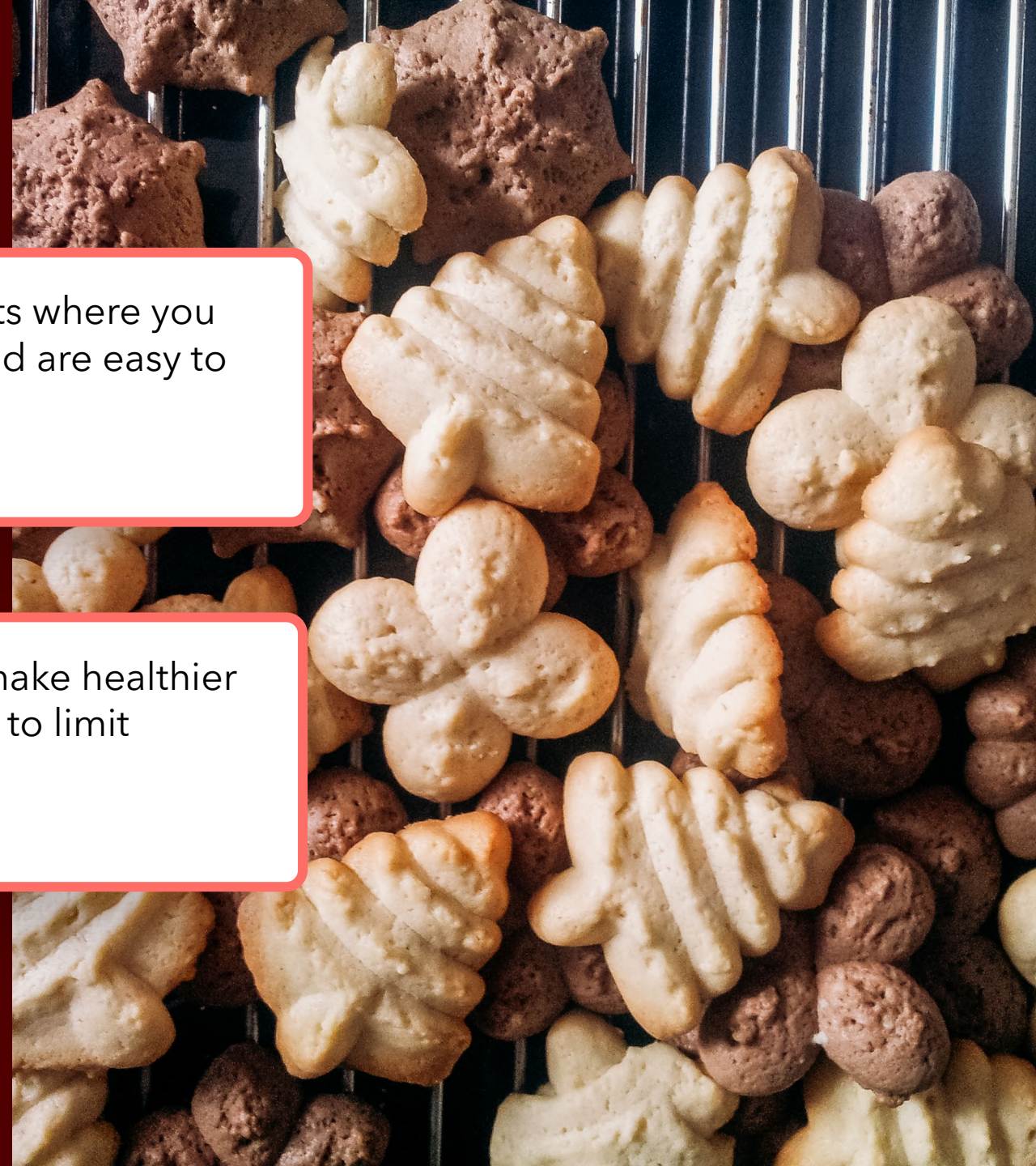
Treats and sweets

Be choosy. Pick treats that are unique to the holiday that you truly enjoy.

Don't leave treats where you can see them and are easy to access.

Make decisions in advance. Budget 2-3 small treats each week.

Plan ahead to make healthier snacks available to limit temptations.



CARROT CAKE BAKED OATMEAL

SERVINGS: 6

ingredients

2 cups of rolled oats
1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk of choice
2 eggs
2 tbsp chia seeds
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup maple syrup
1 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup grated carrots
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup raisins
2 tbsp oil
 $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp baking powder
2 tsp vanilla extract
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp ground cinnamon
 $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp ground nutmeg
 $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp salt

Frosting Ingredients:

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup softened cream cheese
3 tbsp Greek yogurt
3 tbsp maple syrup
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp vanilla extract

directions

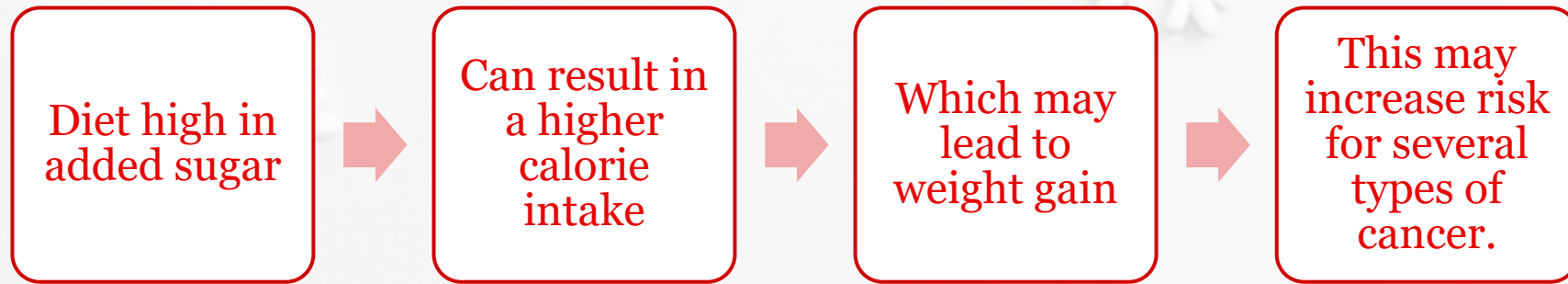
1. Preheat oven to 375°F
2. In a large mixing bowl, mix oats, milk, eggs, maple syrup, vanilla, chia seeds, oil, baking soda, and seasonings until well combined.
3. Stir in carrots and raisins, making sure carrots are evenly distributed.
4. Stir in carrots and raisins, making sure carrots are evenly distributed. Pour mixture into a greased 8×8 baking pan and bake for 40-45 minutes, or until the top is lightly golden and oats are “set”.

Cream cheese frosting

1. To a mixing bowl, combine frosting ingredients and whisk well. To make it extra smooth, a hand or stand mixer works well. Place frosting in the fridge to “firm up” while oats bake.

Added sugar & cancer

- Added sugar does **not** directly cause cancer.



- Higher added sugar intake long term may crowd out other foods containing important nutrients.
- Limit added sugar to no more than 6-10% of your overall calorie intake.



Prioritize protein and plants



Smart
Snacking Tips



Healthy Snack
Ideas

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Protein + plant snacks

- Hummus + carrots
- PB + banana
- Yogurt + berries
- Hard-boiled egg + cucumbers
- Cottage cheese + cantaloupe
- Cheese cubes + grapes
- Roasted almonds + dried apricots



1

2/3 or more
plant-based
foods

2

Up to 1/3
animal-based
foods

New American Plate



American Institute for
Cancer Research's
New American Plate



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Prioritize protein and plants

Protein + plant meals



Meal & Snack Ideas



ROASTED VEGETABLE LASAGNA

SERVINGS: 12

ingredients

2 eggs
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1/2 tsp ground nutmeg
1/2 tsp garlic powder
4 cups low-sodium tomato sauce
3 cups low fat mozzarella cheese
2 eggplants, sliced into ½ inch slices
6 medium zucchinis, sliced into ½ inch slices
Olive oil
1 lb. whole-wheat lasagna noodles
15 oz. low fat ricotta or low-fat cottage cheese



directions

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Grease a 13x9x2-inch baking pan, set aside.
Layer eggplant and zucchini slices on 2 baking sheets, coating both sides lightly with olive oil.
Roast for 20 minutes. Toss the vegetables and continue to roast until well browned and soft, ~ 20 minutes more.

Reduce the oven temperature to 375 degrees.

Cook the lasagna noodles according to package directions. Let them cool slightly.

Meanwhile, in a medium bowl, mix the ricotta or cottage cheese, eggs, Parmesan, nutmeg, and garlic powder.

To assemble, repeat these layers until there are 4 layers of pasta and 3 layers of filling:

Spread thin layer of sauce

Layer noodle strips, slightly overlapping

Spread 1/3 of the ricotta mixture

Sprinkle 1/4 of the mozzarella

Spread 1/3 of the roasted vegetables

Spread the remaining sauce on top and sprinkle with the remaining mozzarella cheese.

Cover the pan with aluminum foil and bake for 30 minutes. Uncover and continue to bake until golden and bubbly, ~15 minutes more. Let stand for 15 minutes before serving.

Adapted from: <https://bloodcancerunitednutrition.org/roasted-vegetable-lasagna/> as provided by the American Institute for Cancer Research



"Don't let perfection
be the enemy of the
good."

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Navigating nutrition at holiday events

- Stay well hydrated through the day
- Don't go to the event hungry
- Survey the options
 - Look for protein and plants
- Avoid grazing
 - Wait 20 minutes before going back for seconds
- Decide about dessert
- End your meal with a mint

MANDARIN KALE SALAD WITH CRANBERRY DRESSING

BY: SUNKIST GROWERS, INC.

SERVINGS: 4

ingredients

Candied pecan ingredients:

1 cup pecan halves
2 tbsp honey
1 Tbsp orange zest
¼ tsp salt

Salad ingredients:

6 mandarin oranges
1 bunch kale
⅓ cup dried cranberries

Dressing ingredients:

½ cup purchased champagne or white
balsamic dressing
2 Tbsp honey
¼ cup frozen or fresh cranberries

directions

Candied Pecans:

Place the pecans in a non-stick sauté pan. Toast over medium-high heat for ~ 2 minutes, stirring often.

Add honey and cook pecans in honey until caramelized, stirring often, ~ 5 minutes. Sprinkle with zest and salt and spread onto parchment paper to cool.

Salad:

Peel and segment the mandarins and add to a large bowl.

Remove any large ribs from the kale and then thinly slice. Wash well and pat dry. Add kale to the oranges along with dried cranberries.

Dressing:

Blend the dressing, honey, and cranberries until smooth. Toss with the salad. Sprinkle with candied pecans.

Alcohol

- Alcohol is never helpful for cancer.
- Make a plan for alcohol before leaving home.
- Alcohol can lower your inhibitions and may lead to overeating.
- Treat alcoholic beverages like a dessert.



American Institute for Cancer Research recommendation:

If you choose to drink, keep amounts to no more than 1 drink per day for women or 2 drinks/day for men.

APPLE CIDER TINI

ingredients

1/2 cup chilled apple cider
1/4 cup chilled orange juice
Splash of pomegranate juice
Cinnamon sticks (for garnish)

directions

Chill martini glasses prior to mixing.
Pour ingredients into a martini glass, stir, and add a cinnamon stick for garnish.

“Let
connection
nourish
you.”

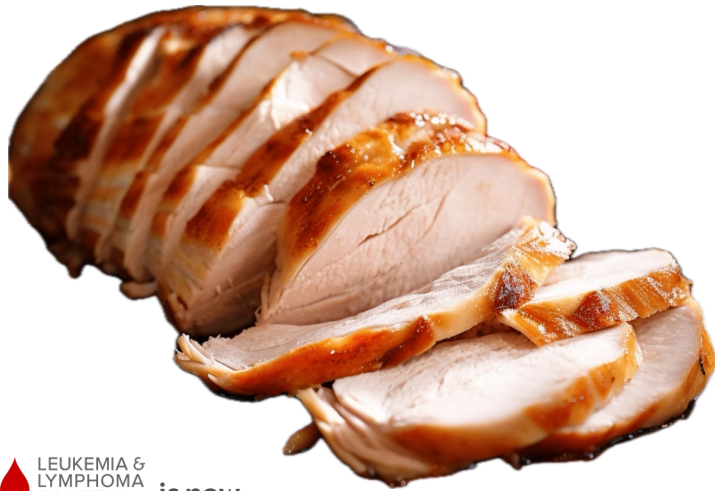


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Seasonal foods that fuel you



ROASTED PEAR & BUTTERNUT SQUASH SOUP

SERVINGS: 6

ingredients

4 cups pears
4 cups diced butternut squash
¾ cup diced red onion
1 ½ Tbsp olive oil
1 tsp kosher salt
1 tsp ground black pepper
32 oz chicken or vegetable
broth

directions

Preheat oven to 400°F. Place pears, squash and onion on a large sheet pan and drizzle with olive oil; season with salt and pepper. Toss gently to combine, then spread out into one layer on sheet pan. Roast in oven for 35 to 40 minutes.

Remove from oven to cool. Place pear, squash, and onion mixture into a food processor and add broth to cover. Process until smooth. Transfer to a pot. Add remainder of broth and mix. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Simmer for ~ 15 minutes.



Margaret Martin MS, RD, LDN, CDCES
Registered Dietitian

Poll #2

What is your go-to strategy for coping during the holidays?

- A. Making dishes that I like
- B. Enjoying events and dinners
- C. Asking for help with tasks
- D. Avoiding large crowds
- E. I'm not sure



Holidays are full of
foods, fun and flavor!

What side effects
make you worried?

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Holiday strategies to manage side effects

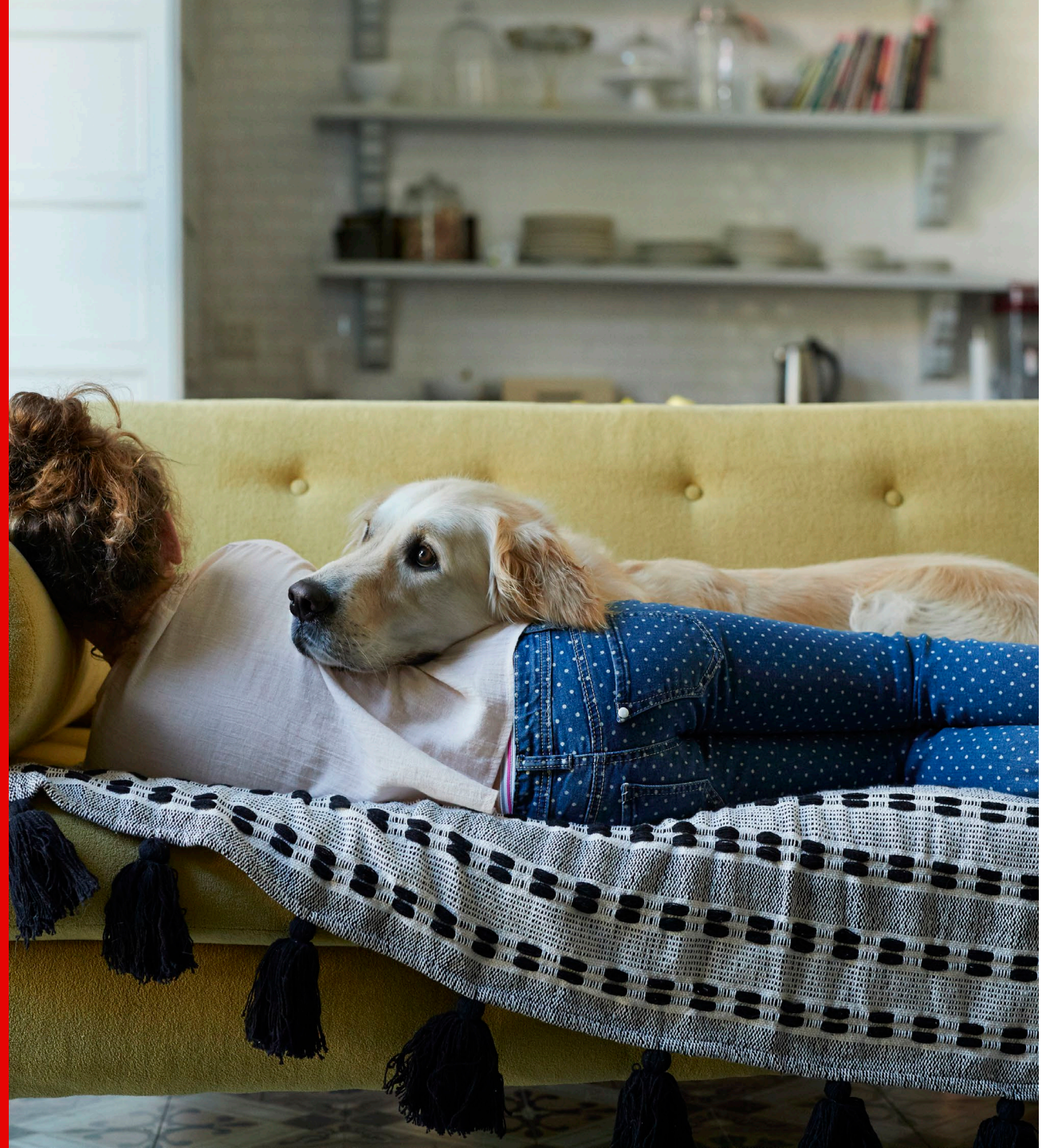
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Fatigue

- Set your goals.
- Plan ahead and set limits.
- Prioritize favorite foods and activities
- Share your goals and delegate tasks.
- Practice self-care.
 - Allow yourself time to relax.
 - Movement/exercise
 - Eat every 3-4 hours
 - Choose protein and whole foods.



Nausea

- Eat often.
 - Timing: Eat small meals or snacks, frequently.
 - Amount: Use small snacks to decrease nausea.
 - Flavors: Add flavors that help. Avoid rich foods.
 - Temperatures: Try cool and cold foods.
- Reduce aromas.
 - Avoid strong scents and aromas.
- Stay cool.
 - Use a fan to keep air flowing.
 - Set the thermostat to your liking.



Taste changes

- Keep your mouth moist.
 - Use gravies, syrups, fruits and fluids at meals.
 - Alternate bites of food with sips of fluids.
 - Rinse your mouth before meals with warm water, pinch of baking soda + salt.
- Add flavors that you can taste the best.
 - Use spices, oil, salt, maple syrup, lemon juice and condiments.
- Change up your choices.
 - Marinate meat, try new food/flavor, try plastic or bamboo utensils and avoid offensive aromas.

 Change in Taste and Smell



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Digestive issues

- Find foods that work for you.
 - Soft, creamy or moist textures
 - Choose fibers that work for you.
 - Include plant proteins in soups, smoothies, yogurt, cereals, protein shakes, legumes and nut butters.
 - Try ginger, citrus, salt and herbs.
- Eat and hydrate often.
 - Chew eat bite well.
- Talk to your doctor.





Choose fibers that best manage your side effects.

Soluble: when experiencing diarrhea

- Oatmeal, barley, carrots, green beans, peeled potatoes, banana, applesauce

Insoluble: when experiencing constipation

- Whole-wheat products, legumes, nuts, broccoli, cauliflower, leafy greens, berries



Guidelines for Increasing Dietary Fiber

Weight Changes:

Portion size,
movement
and healthy
choices

- Serve yourself one portion.
- Use lean entrees and sauces.
- Take a walk after meals.
- Share rich foods & desserts.
- Order an appetizer instead.
- Up your veggies and fruits.
- Drink unsweetened beverages.



Nutrition to support your immune system

- Practice self and food safety.
- Wash produce, store food wisely, use meat thermometer, choose healthy habits

- Maintain a healthy eating plan
- Include protein, Omega-3 fatty acid sources, and phyto-nutrient (plant) choices often.

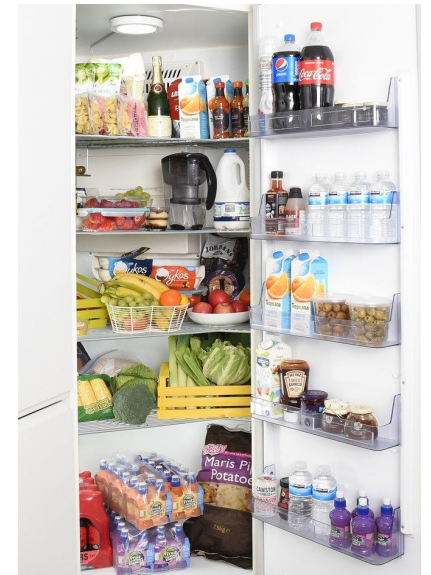
- Be smart about crowds.
- Visit virtually online, outside (if weather permits) or in small groups.

- Keep a stable body weight
- Snack 2-3 times per day. Add choices with more calories
- Manage side effects



Tips to practice food safety during holidays

- Follow storage timeframes to keep leftovers safe.
 - Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours of serving if room temperatures are moderate.
 - Refrigerate leftovers within 1 hour if the environment is 90 degrees or higher.
 - Leftover dish examples: proteins; entrees; casseroles; and dishes with eggs, mayonnaise and/or dairy
- Cut turkey and other meats into smaller pieces, to store in smaller containers.
- Pack leftovers in a cooler if traveling.
- Date your items in the refrigerator and freezer.
 - Use within about 1-4 days in the fridge.
 - Safe when frozen but use within 2 to 6 months for best quality.





Tips to manage side effects during holiday events:

- Ask for help with activities and food preparation.
- Cook early and have a plan for events.
- Talk with the host about your dietary restrictions.
- Be 1st to go through the buffet or food table.
- BYOB - bring your own best dish that works for you.
- Prioritize your events.
- Rest and pace yourself.
- Start new traditions!



Holidays are full of traditions, fun and flavor!

Shopping

Events with friends & family

Decorating

Recipes & Cooking

Travel & vacations

Self-Care time

New traditions

Focus on what makes holidays special to you!

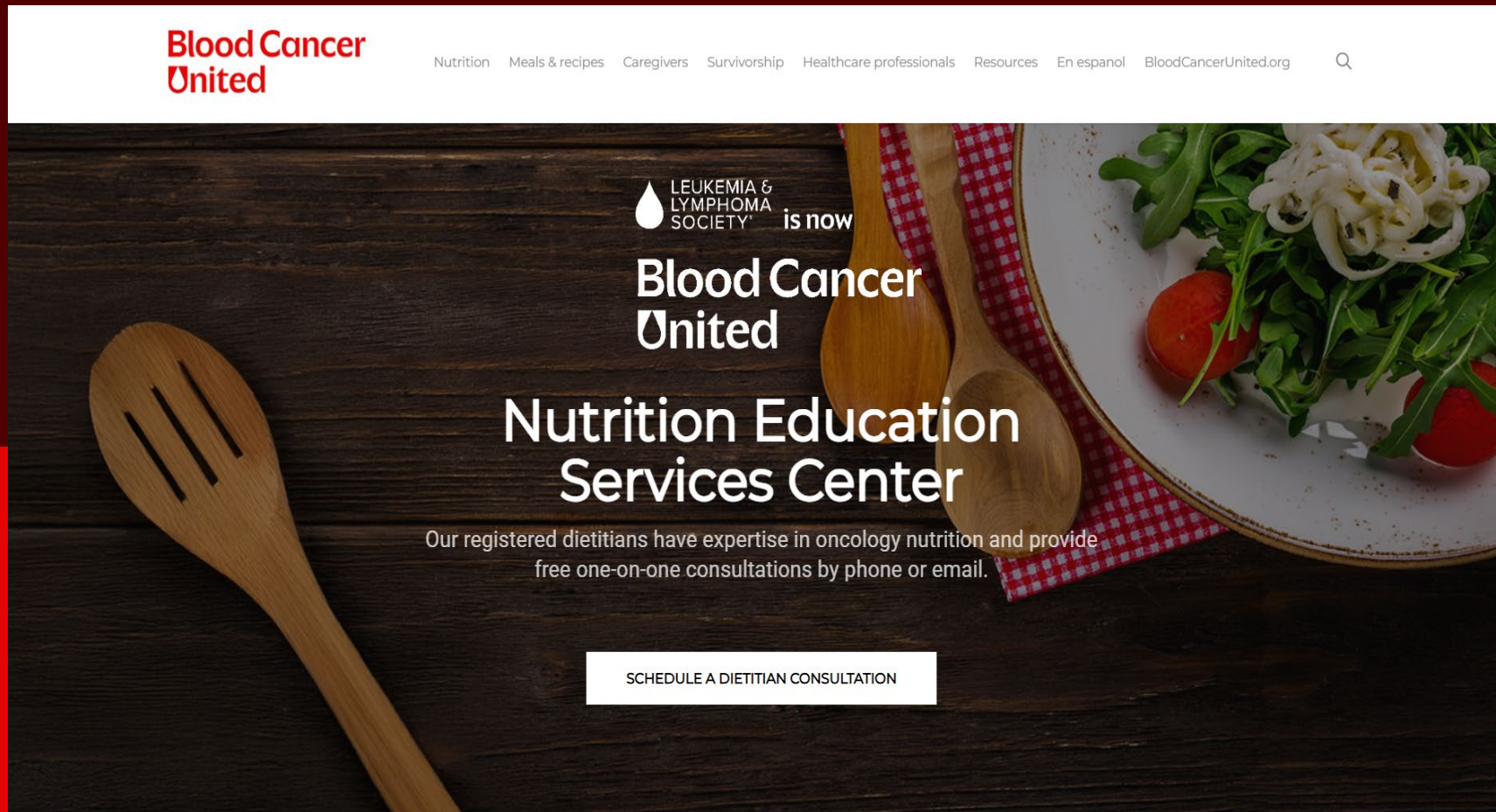
Q&A



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NESC website



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 BloodCancerUnitedNutrition.org

Schedule a Dietitian Consultation

Cancer changes your nutritional needs and often the way your body processes food. Eating well during, and after cancer treatment can help you feel better, maintain your strength, avoid treatment delays, and speed your recovery.

Patients of all cancer types and their caregivers may receive a free one-on-one phone consultation with one of our registered dietitians who have expertise in oncology nutrition.



I am a cancer
patient/survivor



I am a caregiver

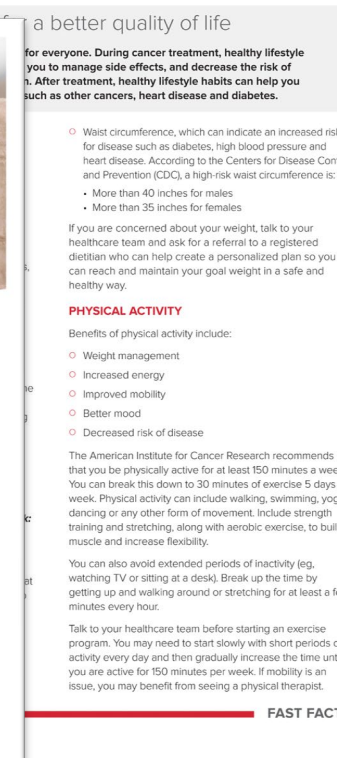
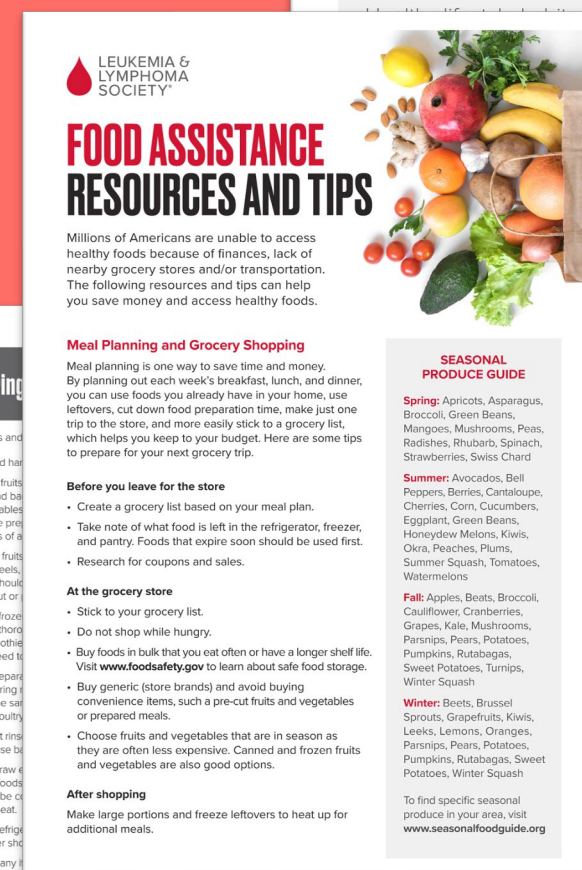
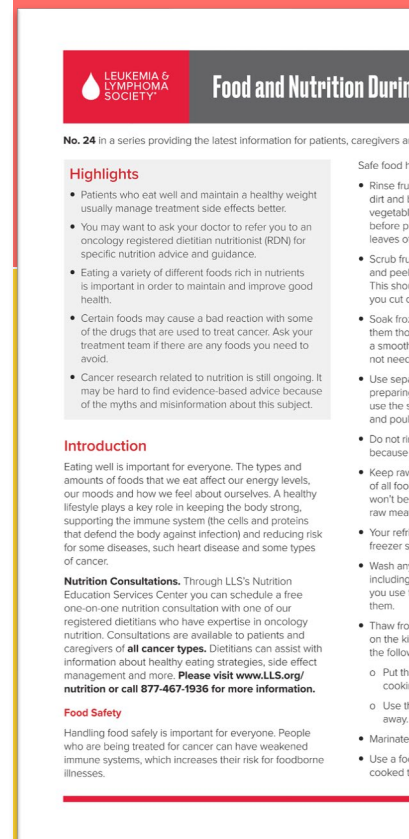
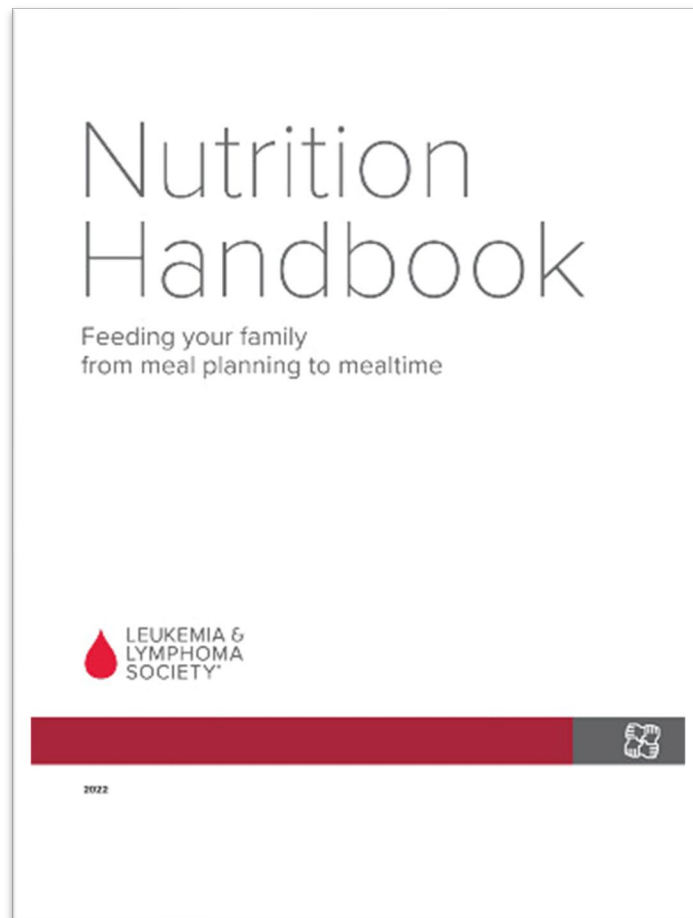


I am a healthcare
professional referring a
patient

Nutrition consultations

 BloodCancerUnited.org/Consult

Resources and publications



Get information and support



Peer-to-peer support



Patient community



Caregiver support



Children & young adults



Webcasts & videos



Online chats



Podcasts



Information booklets



Local programs



Advocacy

Information Specialists

Blood cancer Information Specialists are oncology social workers and nurses who are ready to help you or your loved one navigate a blood cancer diagnosis and connect you to financial and social support information.

Call: (800) 955-4572

Email or chat live online:

BloodCancerUnited.org/InformationSpecialists

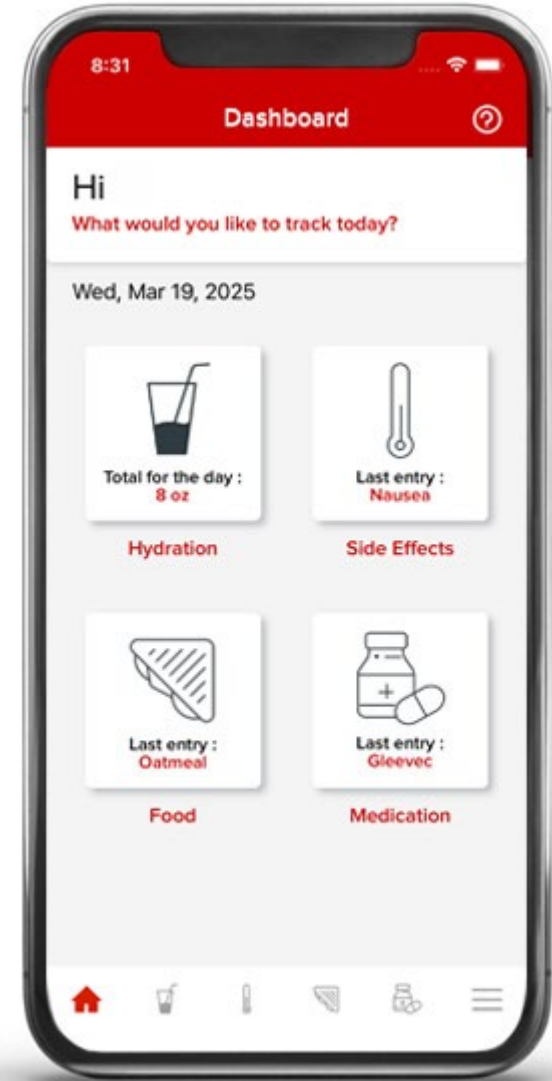
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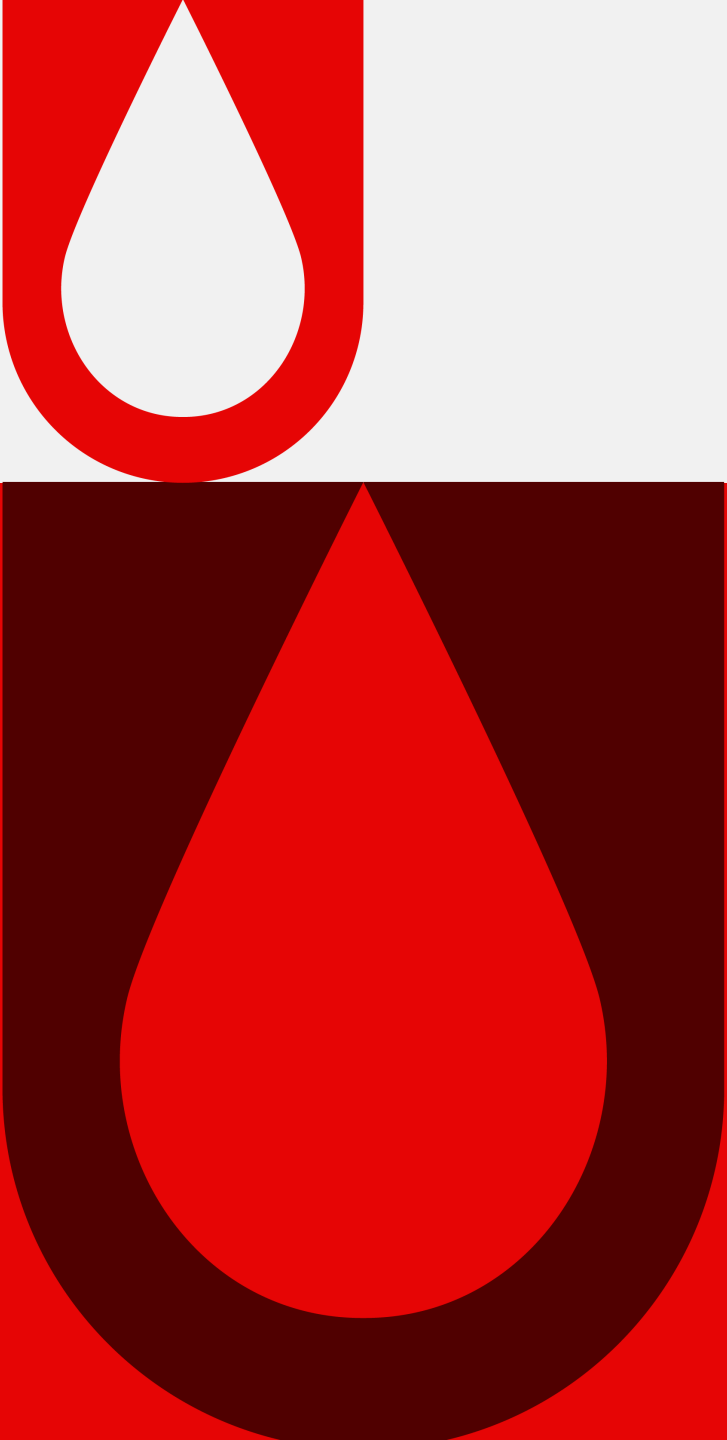
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Health Manager™ mobile app

With Blood Cancer United Health Manager™, you can now use your phone to manage your daily health by tracking side effects, medication, food and hydration, questions for the doctor, grocery lists, and more.

 BloodCancerUnited.org/HealthManager





Thank you

Please check your email to complete the post-event survey! Or scan the QR code.



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Websites

[Have a Plant](#)

[American Heart Association](#)

[American Institute for Cancer Research](#)



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