

How dietitians support patient care

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Cheryl, Registered Dietitian, Department of Clinical Nutrition.

So, my name's Cheryl, and I am a registered dietitian here at LHSC. I work for the Department of Clinical Nutrition. I specifically see cancer patients who will not, should not, and cannot eat. It's really important that we're able to maintain muscle mass, weight, and just general function for people. Without nutrition their ability to recover from surgery, from cancer therapy or chemotherapy or radiation is very difficult.

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A lot of patients will undergo severe side effects from treatment, and they're left with either the inability to chew or to swallow or to use their gastrointestinal tract sufficiently to be able to nourish themselves. So, we often do alternative forms of nutrition for those patients, and that includes strategies like using

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Text graphic appears: Enteral Nutrition: A form of nutrition that is delivered into the digestive system as a liquid.

enteral nutrition or tube feeding and or

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Text graphic appears: Total Parenteral Nutrition: Infusing a specialized form of food through a vein (intravenously).

total parenteral nutrition, which is I.V. nutrition.

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So, I'm planning out nutrition care for these patients and I'm implementing treatment and monitoring that treatment so that they can transition to something that they would be able to go home on. And that might be tube feeds and it might be "TPN" or perhaps they were able to return to oral intake. So I've been in this position for a very long time and I really love working with these types of patients.

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Cheryl, Registered Dietitian, Department of Clinical Nutrition.

They are very appreciative of all of the work that the team does here, and we do a lot in terms of navigating treatment for patients and helping them through the worst parts of their treatment. And we wouldn't be able to do that without a great team.