

## Living Beyond Cancer

### Nutrition and Cancer

Guest: Collen Doyle, MS, RD

**Lauren Hixenbaugh (00:00):**

Welcome to Living Beyond Cancer. I'm Lauren Hixenbaugh, the Coalition Manager for Mountains of Hope. Living Beyond Cancer is a series of podcasts created for cancer patients, survivors, and their caregivers. This series is sponsored by the West Virginia Cancer Coalition Mountains of Hope and is produced by the WVU Cancer Institute's Cancer Prevention and Control. Today is slightly different as we are recording in multiple locations, so please forgive any tonal differences. We have a great episode today. Our topic is nutrition after a cancer diagnosis, and our guest today is Colleen Doyle. Colleen has worked in the field of cancer for over 25 years and is a registered dietitian. We're so happy to have you with us today. Could you just tell us a little bit about yourself and your background in cancer?

**Colleen Doyle (00:46):**

Sure, absolutely. Thank you so much for having me. This is such an important topic and one I'm very passionate about, so I'm really thrilled to be able to participate with you today. I've spent 25 years of my career working in the cancer field. I have worked at the national office of the American Cancer Society for most of that time. My role has really been about communicating what we know about the importance of nutrition and physical activity both from a cancer prevention perspective and then, as you talked about, once somebody has been diagnosed with cancer, what are the nutrition and physical activity factors we need to think about? So have done a lot of different communications on this topic. I work on policy issues that reduce barriers to people being able to eat well and be more active and have worked with school systems, health care systems, and employer systems as well. So it's a topic that I really love talking about, and again, I'm really thrilled and excited to be here with you.

**Lauren Hixenbaugh (01:44):**

Well, like I said, we're thrilled to have you with us. As we were talking earlier, you're actually not in West Virginia, which is unique to our podcast, so I thought you might want to tell us about that.

**Colleen Doyle (01:56):**

That's right. I live in Atlanta. I have to say, given West Virginia, my son hiked the Appalachian Trail last year.

**Lauren Hixenbaugh (02:06):**

Oh, wow.

**Colleen Doyle (02:07):**

He ended up doing a flip flop, and we met him in Harpers Ferry, so got to see some of the great state of West Virginia. Beautiful, beautiful setting you guys have up in that part of the country.

**Lauren Hixenbaugh (02:17):**

Yes, we do. We have a beautiful state. Well, let's dive into our topic today about nutrition. We just did a podcast on exercise, and we kind of thought about that a lot of people will say, "Exercise, I already know about that." I feel like nutrition might be similar in that aspect. People will say, "Hmm, I know about that." So why don't you tell us a little bit about what that really means?

**Colleen Doyle (02:43):**

That's a great question, and I get it a lot. When you think about nutrition, what does nutrition mean, I always put it in the context of, well, you know there's good nutrition, and there's poor nutrition. When we talk about good nutrition, what we're talking about is that an individual is getting enough protein, enough fat, enough carbohydrates, water, vitamins, and minerals that they need for their gender, their activity level, their age. That's what being well-nourished means is getting those nutrients that you need for yourself and your health and your body and your current health status as well. Also when we talk about good nutrition, we talk about really focus about eating whole foods, like eating real foods. I always joke with people and say, "If it's got more than five ingredients, it's not really a real food." That's a bit of an extreme, but it's one of those tips I give to people when they're grocery shopping and looking at labels. But focusing on fruits and vegetables, focusing on whole grain, cutting back on the real processed foods. So many are out there this day and age and for some good reasons. We need some things to throw together, and some of those things are highly processed. But it's that balance of eating whole foods, limited processed foods. Sugar is such a problem in this country today. We eat and drink so much added sugar in our diets, and so also thinking about cutting back on added sugars as well. Since we're talking about cancer, one of the things that we, at the American Cancer Society, have always encouraged people to cut back on red and processed meats as part of that overall healthy diet and maintaining good nutritional status. We know those meats, processed meats, in particular, are associated with colon cancer, and red meats probably, they're likely associated with colon cancer as well. Again, when we talk about good nutrition, we're talking about a diet that is mostly plant-based, lots of fruits and vegetables, lots of whole grains, limited amounts of red and processed meats, and not too much sugar, and not too much highly processed foods.

**Lauren Hixenbaugh (04:59):**

So red meat would mean things like hamburger. Would that mean pork as well?

**Colleen Doyle (05:04):**

I'm so glad you brought pork up. In this country, the main red meats that are consumed are beef, pork, and lamb. We always joke about, and that's why I love that you brought pork up, we laugh about people think pork as the other white meat because there was such good marketing

that had been done around pork. Yes, those are the main types of red meat we mostly consume here. From a processed meat perspective, think about any meat you get at a deli, that's a processed food: ham, bacon, turkey, hot dogs. Those are key processed meats that we absolutely encourage people cut back on.

**Lauren Hixenbaugh (05:42):**

Hmm, okay. Great information. Nutrition is super important not only to us but especially to cancer patients and survivors. You want to talk a little bit about the importance for them?

**Colleen Doyle (05:57):**

It's such a good point. Good nutrition is important for all of us, but particularly when somebody has been diagnosed with cancer it becomes even more important to really focus on it and think about it. It's a good idea, once you've been diagnosed before you're starting treatment, even thinking about that time pre-treatment about getting in the best nutritional shape you can get into: eating those healthy fruits and vegetables, eating whole grains.

**Colleen Doyle (06:23):**

One thing I didn't mention that I probably should have when we talk about good nutrition, what's also really critical to think about is an appropriate amount of calories. We've got some trends in this country from a weight perspective that aren't good that do negatively impact our overall health as a nation. So thinking about good nutrition also in a context of calories is really important. That's something that absolutely comes in to play once somebody begins treatment. Many times, not always, but many times people undergoing treatment just might not feel like eating. The things they used to like, they don't like anymore. They don't sound good anymore. Maybe they are having some side effects of treatment that just make it difficult for them to eat. So thinking about eating as best you can during treatment is especially important. We know people who are well-nourished during treatment are better able to tolerate treatment. They tend to have less side effects from treatment. We see them healing quicker, recovering more quickly. They also have more energy and just feel better overall. So that during treatment time is really important to be able to get in as much good nourishment as you can. Immediately after treatment, a lot of times treatments might result in some of our body's nutrient stores being depleted or at least really lowered, if you will. So being able to replenish those nutrient stores that may have been lost as a result of treatment is really important in that immediate post-treatment phase.

**Colleen Doyle (08:04):**

Then longer term, living beyond cancer, it's so important and we talk to so many survivors who say, "Wow, this was just a real not wake up call," for some people it was a wake-up call, "but a real push for me to say, 'I want to do everything I can to be as healthy as I can moving forward.'" There's been a lot of research that has already happened and a lot more that's going on that is showing that post-treatment, that long-term survivorship phase, eating well and being active can help reduce the risk of developing another primary cancer, for some cancers can help reduce the risk of recurrence of those cancers. Hopefully, hopefully, the more and

more research we get we'll see that, again, eating well post-cancer diagnosis really does have a positive impact on survival rates from cancer. So through that whole trajectory of cancer diagnosis, treatment, immediate post-treatment, and that longer-term survivorship, this issue of eating well is so important and so valuable. We always say that from a health goals' perspective, post-diagnosis, setting goals to eat well, be active, manage your weight are some of the most important health-related goals that a cancer survivor can set for themselves.

**Lauren Hixenbaugh (09:34):**

That's great. We did talk about in one of our other podcasts, it also makes you feel better eating healthy.

**Colleen Doyle (09:40):**

Absolutely. When I was in graduate school, I was part of a diet study. All of our meals were provided to us. We couldn't eat anything outside of that. It was all absolutely very well balanced. We had calculated carbs and proteins and fat down to the nth degree. I always thought I ate pretty well, but when I was on that diet study knowing that I was getting exactly the amount of nutrients that my body needed, I felt fantastic. I always thought I felt pretty good. But it does. It makes a huge, huge difference. I just had somebody say to me the other day that he's been trying to cut back on sweet stuff: cookies, doughnuts, cakes. He said for three weeks he hasn't had anything. He said, "I feel so much better." He says, "I feel like I'm more mentally alert, too. So eating well, good nutrition has a lot of positive impacts for us in a lot of different ways.

**Lauren Hixenbaugh (10:39):**

We know that cancer patients and even survivors don't feel great when they're going through those treatments, so having that nutrition is important for so many reasons. It really does make you feel better, as you said. One of the things you did talk about was that when they're undergoing treatment or even after that sometimes food maybe tastes or smells differently. Why is that, and how does that affect our folks?

**Colleen Doyle (11:07):**

There's a couple of different reasons why that can happen and not everybody experiences, but to your point, many do. There's lots of different types of treatments, lots of different types of medications that can influence our taste buds, and even how we smell foods as well. So a lot of people will report back and say, "This just doesn't taste good. I used to love this, and now I can't stand it. Or this tastes really bitter to me when it didn't before, or this has a metallic taste to it." For those types of things, if something is tasting bitter, squeezing some lemon juice or some citrus on if you're eating a soup, or whatever it is you're eating, a little bit of citrus can help take away some of that bitter taste. Also, particularly if somebody is having that metallic flavor in their mouth, using plastic silverware, cooking things in glass dishes as opposed to a metal-type pan. For a lot of people, too, they might not be able to taste much at all, and so they might not be interested in eating. Even though we know it's so important to get those calories, get those nutrients in, they might just not feel like eating because they can't taste anything. So thinking

about strongly-flavored foods, thinking about using Parmesan cheese instead of Swiss, for example, in something. That has a little more oomph, a little more flavor to it. Onions, garlic, these types of things that add some flavor. Number one, experimenting even with different herbs and spices, and number two, adding more than you're used to to give that a little more oomph and flavor as well.

**Colleen Doyle (12:53):**

Not everybody experiences these things, but many people do. There's a lot of good information, a lot of good resources out there to really help people battle with some of those things. Because, again, as we've been saying, it's so important to get those nutrients in. If there's any kind of side effect of treatment, whether we're talking these taste alterations or whether we're talking whether somebody is nauseous, has diarrhea, is constipated, is losing weight and needs to eat more, having resources that can give you those tips to get that nutrition in when you otherwise just might not feel like it is really helpful.

**Lauren Hixenbaugh (13:38):**

Good. Those are good tips and tricks. I like that. The other thing you said that I wanted to go back to was finding the right nutrition for your body. So how do we do that? We think we know what we need, but how do we really know?

**Colleen Doyle (13:54):**

Especially, going through cancer treatment, that's a time of real change. I get asked a lot, "Well, can you give me, quote, unquote, a cancer diet for me when I'm undergoing treatment?" The answer to that is, "No, not really," because everybody's different. Everybody's different, bottom line. Cancer is different in different people. Even the same type of cancer might have a totally different reaction with one person versus the other even with the same type of cancer. Different types of treatment also impact nutrient needs.

**Colleen Doyle (14:32):**

The absolute best way for somebody to know that they are getting what they need is to talk to a dietitian, talk to a registered dietitian. Ideally, it would be a dietitian who is certified to work in oncology. There are hundreds of them throughout the country. That is the best way to really find out, "What is it I need as I'm going through this challenge right now?" That individualized care plan is what's going to be really, really valuable. Again, you and I might be going through the same cancer, the same treatment but have totally different needs. A dietitian is one of the best bets for really, really figuring that out. We certainly need more dietitians in this country, but in a lot of cancer centers, certainly, a lot of hospitals have dietitians on board as part of the primary team, if you will. If you don't have access to a dietitian, you ask for a referral to one. It will be well worth the time because dietitians are clinically trained. We have to go through continuing education hours on a regular basis, and so you can ensure that you're talking to somebody who really is going to be able to take a look at your current situation and make the recommendations that are most appropriate, most meaningful, most impactful for you and your current situation.

**Lauren Hixenbaugh (16:00):**

A dietitian definitely would be able to answer some of the questions I'm going to pose to you as I research this topic. One of those that I came upon often is that healthy foods are more expensive, harder to prepare. Those are some comments that I saw. What are some low-cost and easy prep options that you recommend to people?

**Colleen Doyle (16:23):**

There are so many of them. It's interesting, too, because it seems like there are two camps. One that absolutely eating healthy costs more. It's more expensive. On the other camp it's like, no, it doesn't need to be that way. I think that the truth is probably somewhere in the middle there. I always think about, too, a pound of apples versus a pound of candy, frequently that candy is more expensive than the apple is. So I always talk to people about, and some of this just sounds so basic, but thinking about when you're at the grocery store, buying things that are in season will always be cheaper than buying things out of season. Plus, hopefully, they're locally grown and not shipped in from across the country, but we all don't have that kind of access. But thinking about buying things in season. Thinking about the sales that go on in the grocery stores that you typically shop at. I've been doing some research on this just for personal reasons. I don't know that I'll ever become an extreme couponer, but I'm like, "I should be using coupons. I really should be doing this more." So looking at what I've learned is that the grocery store, the sales cycles tend to be about six weeks. So one thing that's helpful when you're trying to eat well and cut back on costs is for six weeks track those things at the grocery store that you typically buy or some things you want to be buying but you haven't, and track those prices. When you see when the lowest price is, that's a perfect time to stock up on those items that you use regularly and also look at using coupons and using store circulars, too, to help with some of those prices.

**Colleen Doyle (18:16):**

One thing I wanted to bring up particularly thinking about the grocery store and prices, frequently, I mean not so much now during this time of year where we've got more fresh produce than we typically do, a lot of people always say, "Fresh is best. You should never eat canned. You should never eat frozen fruits and vegetables." It's interesting because quite frequently the frozen fruits and vegetables are more nutritious than some of the fresh because... I used to live in California. I think about all the strawberries we grew in California. By the time those strawberries are shipped across the country to grocery stores in West Virginia, for example, a lot of that nutrients might have dissipated during that travel time. So those frozen fruits and vegetables that are picked and flashed frozen and then frozen so quickly retain those nutrients. I always tell people frozen is a perfectly fine alternative to fresh fruits and vegetables. Again, might be even healthier. But if you are buying them, in the vegetables, watch out for butter sauces and other sauces that might be added. You want to just get straight spinach or straight carrots or whatever is it. With fruits, watching out for added sugar. Look at the ingredient list and see, does it just say strawberries? If not, look for another type, another brand of that. With canned fruits and vegetables, they can be healthy alternatives, too. They're very inexpensive, relatively inexpensive. Again, I tell people with the fruits, watch out for

packed in heavy juice because that's a lot of added sugar in them. With canned vegetables, I always tell people to watch out for the sodium content so look at that ingredient list or the nutrition facts panel and see how much sodium is in there. You want to go with the low sugar, low sodium versions of canned foods as well.

**Colleen Doyle (20:16):**

I think doing some meal planning and thinking about being able to... I know everybody's so busy during the week, and it's so easy to just stop by the fast food place on your way home, but doing some planning on the weekend, mapping out meals for the week, doing some prep. You might even cook whole meals and put them in the freezer. Chopping up some fruits and vegetables or herbs or cooking the brown rice that might take a little longer to cook than white rice, doing that on the weekend. That's another way to help ensure that your family is getting healthy meals but also that you're doing it in a cost-effective way.

**Lauren Hixenbaugh (21:00):**

You gave some really great tips for the grocery store, but what about eating out? Like you said, it's a lot easier to run through somewhere. I'm not recommending that people always doing that. But if you have to do that, what are some key tricks that we should know about when we go out to eat or fast food or something?

**Colleen Doyle (21:19):**

That's a great question, especially because we do out eat out a lot. As a nation, we eat out a lot. There's a couple of things that I always go by. Number one, of those bread baskets, those chips and salsa, those things that you sit down and automatically here's a big bread basket for you, I always, always, always suggest not leaving those at the table. You can easily consume a thousand calories before you even eat your meal by having those things that come visit you at the table ahead of time. So that's one thing. I am just always in the habit of ordering an appetizer and maybe a side salad or a cup of soup instead of an entrée. I think we all are aware at how portion sizes in this country are ginormous. They're just huge. Easily, easily these portion sizes can easily cover you for three meals. So I just tend to go for some of the smaller things which fill me up, and they're fine. One thing, if I do get entrées, a couple different things. One, sometimes if I order an entrée, I do this all the time but some people do it, sometimes they'll just go ahead and ask, "Can you just cut it all in half and just put part of it in a to-go box for me right now?" It sounds kind of crazy that there's been research on this, but there's been research that shows the more food that's in front of us, the more we're going to eat. So just to help with some of that control, it's easy to just ask them to box up half of it from that perspective and have the leftovers later. Or sharing a meal with somebody.

**Lauren Hixenbaugh (23:08):**

My husband and I always ask for two plates.

**Colleen Doyle (23:11):**

Yes, absolutely, absolutely. Of course, then you got to be sure you both like what you decide-

**Lauren Hixenbaugh (23:19):**

Right, absolutely.

**Colleen Doyle (23:20):**

... which with my husband and I it doesn't always work out, but it's a great way to share those things. I'm a realist. People are going to go out to eat. They're going to eat the chips and salsa before their meal. They're going to eat the full meal, and they might even have dessert. I try to get people to think about that and plan ahead. If you know you're going to go out to eat, if you're going to go out to dinner, let's say, eat a little less throughout the day. Think about eating a little less the next day. Take an extra walk. Add 15 minutes onto your walk that day. Plan for it. Again, it's used to not be any big deal when we would go out and eat these big portions sizes, but now we do it so frequently that it really is contributing to some of the weight trends that we're seeing in this country. Another thing that's really important for people to be aware of is that when we eat out, the meals we eat when we eat out tend to have more fat, more calories, more sodium, and depending on what the item is, more sugar than the foods we make at home. So eating at home, it's healthier overall, and it's less expensive, too. So you get a great double whammy from eating at home. It's nice way to teach kids about food, too, and have them involved with meal planning and shopping and preparing and just trying new things. My kids weren't always really interested and amendable to that, but they're older now, and they enjoy trying new things and making new things. I think that's such an important thing to just help our kids get off on a healthy start is being involved in the kitchen like that.

**Lauren Hixenbaugh (25:12):**

Absolutely. It gives them all kinds of different choices as they get older. We've all had the friend that won't eat anything and the little kid that only eats chicken nuggets and that sort of thing. So that's a great tip for people to start getting kids involved and letting them pick things. That's wonderful. A great idea.

**Colleen Doyle (25:32):**

One thing, too, just thinking about eating out, sometimes people will ask me, "Are there any words on a menu I should be aware of and watch out for?"

**Lauren Hixenbaugh (25:42):**

Yeah, absolutely.

**Colleen Doyle (25:44):**

Anything that says, well, this is a real obvious one, a real no duh, fried, anything that says fried can have a lot of calories and a lot of fat in it, so watching out for that. If you see something that says crispy, that's another indicator that it's probably something that is fried.

**Lauren Hixenbaugh (26:01):**

They probably fried it longer.

**Colleen Doyle (26:03):**

Yeah, right. That's right with two layers of coating on it. Words like, again, this sounds like a no-brainer, but sauce: Hollandaise, Alfredo. There are some of those words that really can kick you. I always encourage people, ask questions. If you don't like how something is prepared or you wish it came with a red sauce instead of a white sauce, for example, ask for some of those substitutions. It's not going to hurt to ask. They won't always say, yes. Many places do. But it doesn't hurt to ask. I have to tell you this funny story. Years ago I was teaching some nutrition classes at a local athletic club, and one session was on eating out: How do I eat out and still maintain some semblance of a healthy diet? We talked about different things. Like, if you order a salad, for example, asking for the dressing on the side so that you can control how much dressing is going on that in this example. Well, we had a guy, and this was in Ohio at the time, he went on a business trip to Texas. He had gone out, and he had ordered salad with dressing on the side. They brought him a salad with dressing on half of it. It wasn't separate on the side. His plate was a big plate of salad with dressing on half of it. So we always joked after that, be sure your waitress knows what you're really asking for in those kind of situations. Yeah, don't be afraid to ask. Restaurants are in the business of serving customers, and so I always encourage people, it doesn't hurt to ask. They might say, no, but they might say, yes. Hopefully, more often than not they will.

**Lauren Hixenbaugh (27:51):**

Yeah, absolutely. Are there any other common questions that you get from folks that you want to talk about?

**Colleen Doyle (27:58):**

Gosh, I get so many. I will say related to cancer and cancer survivorship, I get a lot of, "What foods should I eat to reduce my risk?" I think not only for cancer but a lot of the chronic diseases that we see in this country today, what's most important is that overall dietary pattern. Despite what a headline might say about, I don't know, a study on strawberries and cancer risk, it's really that overall dietary pattern that makes the most difference in terms of reducing your risk of cancer and these other chronic diseases that we're seeing. I get a lot of questions about, "What are the top 10 healthiest foods?" I put them in the context of colorful fruits and vegetables. We don't know which nutrients are most protective against cancer, and so we encourage people to focus on the colorful fruits and vegetables because in general those are the most nutritious. There's definitely some outliers like cauliflower, for example, but antioxidants and phytochemicals are what give fruits and vegetables those colors. So we tell people focus on the colorful ones and eat a wide variety of them because we just don't know.

**Colleen Doyle (29:23):**

The same thing with focusing on those whole grains. We started off talking about fruits and vegetables, whole grains, limited amounts of red and processed meat. Those are the key things to think about in terms of reducing your risk of cancer and improving your overall health. There's not one food. There's not one food item or food group that's going to make a difference. It really is that combination of all of those foods and all of those nutrients they

provide working in synergy to protect us. That's probably one question I get a lot of is, "Which foods should I eat to reduce my risk of cancer? There's the answer with that one. One thing, too, we had talked about kids. People ask me a lot about their kids: "What should my kids be eating?" Obviously, I feel very strongly about this. It's so important that we are good role models for our kids, that they're seeing us eat the healthy foods. They're seeing us and involving us, again, in meal prep, etc., at home and recognizing that obviously a lot of what kids learn to eat is from home and what they see mom and dad doing, and thinking about what types of foods you have in your kitchen that your kids have access to. In my house, if I would have a chocolate craving, I'd buy chocolate and I'd hide in the vegetable drawer because frequently nobody was looking in the vegetable drawer for anything. Thinking about having healthy foods available, accessible, a bowl of apples on the counter, little baby carrots ready to go in the refrigerator. I think that that is just something that is so critically important for us to think about is youth in this country and helping ensure that they get the best, most healthy start to living a lifelong, healthy, nutritious lifestyle.

**Lauren Hixenbaugh (31:27):**

My husband and I, as I told you earlier, have a young daughter. My husband and I both don't like tomatoes. So we'll take our tomatoes off things, and we'll cut it up, and we'll give it to her. We'll both go "Mmm" as she's eating it.

**Colleen Doyle (31:39):**

Yes!

**Lauren Hixenbaugh (31:40):**

It's the same idea. We really want her to be able to like those things that we don't like even if we're pretending. She'll catch on eventually, but for now, she's eating something healthy and we're encouraging her to eat something that we don't like.

**Colleen Doyle (31:54):**

Just enjoy it for now. My big thing... I like most foods but blue cheese. I can't even be in the same room as blue cheese. I always laugh with my parents about it because one of my jobs, when we were growing up, was I always had to make the salads for dinner. My parents loved blue cheese, and I'd have to put blue cheese on their... I've tried to disguise it in a number of different ways throughout the years, but I just have never quite gotten there yet. So maybe there's still hope for you and tomatoes.

**Lauren Hixenbaugh (32:27):**

As we're talking about preparing meals for our families, what about caregivers that are preparing meals for their loved ones that are undergoing treatment or already went through treatment, any suggestions for them?

**Colleen Doyle (32:41):**

Yes, absolutely. One thing I'll start off by saying, it's just as it's so important for the person undergoing treatment to be well-nourished, be as best nourished as they can be, that's so important for the caregiver, too, because we need you feeling the energy, maintaining your strength, feeling good to be able to care for your loved one. So that's first and foremost, that whole self-care for cancer caregivers. A couple of things to think about and recognize is that you might make your loved one's most favorite dish, and they may be totally turned off by it. So recognizing that, again, things might not feel the same, taste the same, carry the same appeal as they might have before cancer treatment and not to get discouraged by that, to manage your expectations about that and recognize it's nothing personal. This is just what they're going through right now, so not being discouraged by that.

**Colleen Doyle (33:47):**

Doing the best you can to have a wide variety of things available for the person you're caring for is really helpful and valuable. One thing, too, and I love this trick, somebody had told me about this years ago, where the caregiver would put a little cooler by the couch or the chair where the person they're caring for might spend a fair amount of time during the day and have it filled with healthy snacks. Have some cheese sticks in there, have some carrots sticks in there, have some bottles of water or some type of nutrition beverage that is packed with calories and protein so that if you're not right there the whole time with the person you're caring for, at least they have something close by and don't necessarily have to get up and walk into the kitchen if they don't feel like it. Another thing and I learned this, too, a long time ago, frequently smells bother people who are undergoing treatment, so thinking about being aware if the person you're caring for is having some aversion to any kind of smells, more smells in particular. Somebody told me that they would cook things in a crock-pot in the garage so that there was just no aroma from the food that might bother the person who was going through treatment. Just being aware and really communicating and asking, "Is there something, in particular, you're feeling? Is there something you absolutely don't even want to see in the house?" Having that open, regular communication about their needs and desires is going to be something really valuable obviously for the patients and also for that caregiver, too, and just that real sense of being satisfied that you're doing all you can to help your person through this really challenging time.

**Lauren Hixenbaugh (35:52):**

That's a great idea. I love the idea of the basket. We all have that moment when we need to grab something quickly. That's nice for them to have that easily accessible but also for it to be healthy as well. That's a great idea.

**Colleen Doyle (36:07):**

Well, one of my friends was undergoing cancer treatment last year. We were talking about it. He was telling me that even to just get up from the couch and walk into the kitchen was exhausting to him, and it wasn't a huge mansion that they lived in. It was not much. So really being cognizant of how difficult, how challenging that time is in a lot of different ways and, again, doing everything you can, within reason, to help meet those needs.

**Lauren Hixenbaugh (36:43):**

We've talked a lot about tips and tricks and some different ideas. Is there somewhere that folks can go for resources?

**Colleen Doyle (36:52):**

Yes. There's a lot of different resources out there. No surprise, my favorite one is [cancer.org](https://www.cancer.org). I will say we've got lots of information on all different types of cancer. We've got information for caregivers. We've got video clips for caregivers. We've got cancer support groups. We have some great books. I definitely wanted to let you know about two books in particular. We've got one that's called the Complete Guide to Nutrition for Cancer Survivors. It was written by four oncology certified dietitians. It is so thorough. It is just fantastic. It has so many resources in there. It also lists a lot of different types of other organization and resources throughout the country, internationally, etc.

**Colleen Doyle (37:46):**

We also just recently published... We have two cookbooks specifically for people undergoing cancer treatment, and we just released a second one last fall. It is fantastic. Was written by an oncology dietitian and also a person who... we call her a foodie. She's a real foodie. She's done a lot of cookbooks. The way this cookbook is organized is by symptom match so that if somebody's nauseous, the recipes in that chapter tend to be bland. They tend to be recipes that you can serve room temperature because, again, sometime that aroma might be bothersome but things at room temperature tend to not let off that aroma as much. We have nausea. We've got constipation, diarrhea, unintentional weight loss, mouth sores, swallowing difficulties, and also those taste alterations that we talked about. So each recipe is categorized into a chapter. But we also know that you might be having a variety of different symptoms at the same time, and so each recipe also is flagged. For example, let's say you're nauseous but you've been having diarrhea, so the recipe is coded: This is good for if you are nauseous and if you have diarrhea. So it's just really helpful and has a lot of good practical tips as well as for the caregiver, too, and has a lot of different resources that are out there. One organization, too, that I think just has fantastic resources is the American Institute for Cancer Research. They are based in DC. Their whole focus is on nutrition and activity and cancer. They've got great resources. Earlier when I was talking about access to a dietitian, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, this is the largest group of dietitians in the country, many of whom are oncology dietitians. There is a place on their website that you can put in your zip code, and it will pull up dietitians in your area. So if for whatever reason you can't find access to somebody where you are, that Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics website is a real good resource for something like that.

**Lauren Hixenbaugh (40:11):**

I think it's important for listeners to know... You just described reliable sources that have created these resources. There's a lot of information out there especially about nutrition that's not always accurate. I think that's important for people to know as well.

**Colleen Doyle (40:32):**

I'll tell you, even when I'm searching for something online, something nutrition-related, I'll put in the topic I'm looking for and I always also type in that Google search bar "registered dietitian." I want to know that this information is coming from a credible, credible source. You're right. Gosh, there's so much out there. It can be so confusing. Again, that old adage, what is it? If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. We need to be discriminating consumers of information. That's for sure.

**Lauren Hixenbaugh (41:13):**

As we begin to wrap up today, I just want to take a moment, revisit some points for our listeners. So if listeners remembered one tip out of today's podcast, what would you hope that it would be?

**Colleen Doyle (41:26):**

I hope they would remember a few tips, but if there was only one, I hope it would be along the lines of just how important nutrition is through that entire cancer continuum from diagnosis to pre-treatment to treatment, immediately post and beyond and that there's no one size fits all, but there's very good guidance out there about what a healthy diet looks like. So I hope that that's what people would leave with is that it's not just about one food or one food group. It's really that combination of healthy choices throughout the day and over time that is best for your overall health and certainly for cancer, too.

**Lauren Hixenbaugh (42:13):**

That's great. Thank you. Colleen also gave us lots of resources to look through, but I just wanted to give you some additional information. Living Beyond Cancer, if you would like to know a little bit more, you can visit [moh.wv.gov](http://moh.wv.gov), or you can go to the WVU Cancer Institute website at [wvucancer.org](http://wvucancer.org). Colleen also mentioned support groups. Living Beyond Cancer has our own Facebook support group, so if you just go to Facebook, type in [Living Beyond Cancer](#). You'll find us. We'd love to have you. It's a very supportive environment for everyone. Living Beyond Cancer would like to thank Colleen Doyle for joining us today as well as our listeners. We hope that you'll continue to join us.