

Facing cancer: eat and move!



Brussels, November 12, 2020 – **On 12 November, the Jules Bordet Institute, the Belgian reference centre in the fight against cancer, is participating in Nutrition Day. The occasion to again stress the essential link between healthy eating combined with regular physical exercise and treatment against cancer. Eat and move: two health "assets" that are in your hands when facing this disease.**

Nutrition Day, an international audit of the nutrition of hospitalised patients – figures

Initiated in 2006 by Vienna University and the European Society for Clinical Nutrition and Metabolism (ESPEN), every year Nutrition Day undertakes a vast international audit (64 countries) inside hospitalisation units. Carried out by dietetic and nutrition teams, this audit looks at the nutritional status of patients before and after a period of hospitalisation and its impact on mortality in the 30 days following the audit.

The results raise serious questions. The analysis of the figures since 2006 shows that in Belgium 50% of patients eat less during the week prior to hospitalisation, 40% of patients experience an involuntary weight loss during the 3 months prior to hospitalisation, and 14% of patients eat nothing during their hospitalisation.

The follow-up of patients 30 days following the audit shows an increased mortality (2% to 8%) among patients who lost weight or ate less before and/or during their hospitalisation. This was observed among all age groups but is more significant among elderly subjects. Findings that confirm the importance of nutritional care when treating patients.

As a cancer patient, watch out for involuntary weight loss!

When facing cancer it is important to consult a dietician so as to adopt an appropriate diet that makes it possible to control weight increases and losses. Involuntary weight loss is often observed in patients, sometimes immediately following diagnosis. The causes are many: loss of appetite, eating difficulties and/or digestive intolerance, changes to the metabolism linked to the tumour, side effects of the treatment, anxiety or a tendency to depression, etc. This weight loss then results in fatigue and reduced tolerance to the medication and can even adversely affect the patient's vital prognosis. This is why it is

important to inform your doctor or dietician of any involuntary weight loss. In general, it is always recommended to follow a varied and balanced diet, consisting of vegetables and fruit, proteins (of animal or vegetable origin) and an adequate calorie intake. In the case of cancer, it is important to cover nutritional needs (nutrients and vitamins) to maintain an adequate weight, fight the disease and better tolerate treatments.

How does physical exercise help to live with the disease?

For a long time physical exercise was regarded as inadvisable for people who are ill and who need to rest as much as possible. It has now been shown that being physically active brings many benefits. It helps increase the assimilation of proteins in the muscles and to maintain muscular mass that is essential at all times but especially when you are ill. Physical activity also has a positive effect on hormones and the immune system. These are factors that will increase tolerance to the treatment and facilitate recovery. Of course this physical activity needs to be adapted to each patient depending on his or her illness, treatment and age.

For more information on Nutrition Day, go to www.nutritionday.org

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About the Jules Bordet Institute

An integrated multidisciplinary centre, unique in Belgium, the Jules Bordet Institute is an autonomous hospital devoted exclusively to cancer.

For more than 80 years, the Jules Bordet Institute has been providing its patients with diagnostic and therapeutic strategies at the forefront of progress to prevent, detect and actively combat cancer. The Institute pursues three missions: care, research and teaching. Its international reputation attracts the world's leading cancer experts. Its spirit of innovation has enabled it to participate in the development and discovery of major new methods of diagnosis and treatment with the aim of bringing the findings to the patient as rapidly as possible.

In May 2018, the Jules Bordet Institute received official accreditation and designation from the OECI (Organisation of European Cancer Institutes) as a "Comprehensive Cancer Centre", a quality label reserved for multidisciplinary cancer care institutions whose activities include research and teaching. This is a first for Belgium.

The Jules Bordet Institute is a member of the Iris and Université Libre de Bruxelles hospital networks. With its 160 beds dedicated exclusively to cancer patients, every year the Institute treats more than 6,000 in-patients., 12,000 out-patients and provides 75,000 consultations. To effectively meet future demographic and scientific developments, the Institute is planning to build a new Institute Bordet on the ULB university campus in Anderlecht, next to the Erasmus Hospital. Inauguration is planned for 2021.

www.bordet.be

About the Friends of the Bordet Institute

The Friends of the Jules Bordet Institute is a non-profit-making organisation with the sole aim of supporting and financing research at the Jules Bordet Institute, a cancer centre that is a reference in Belgium and abroad. As the largest private donor to the Bordet Institute, "The Friends" have donated almost 12 million euros in the past five years.

Considerable progress has been made in the field of oncology in recent years. Our understanding of the biological origin of cancer is growing all the time. Whereas 10 years ago we spoke of the microscopic analysis of tumours, today we speak of genetic profile, of sequencing, etc. Dozens of new molecules and markers have been developed, permitting the advent of personalised treatment. This progress has to a large extent been made possible through the extraordinary technological progress of recent years. But these new techniques that now enable us to probe the infinitesimally small are increasingly expensive.

For more than 50 years, the help of the "Friends" has enabled the Jules Bordet Institute to pursue its research using the most advanced technologies, thereby providing patients with the most innovative screening and treatment techniques. Techniques that generate life and hope.

By helping and supporting "The Friends of the Bordet Institute" you are participating in the many research programmes that they support and that all pursue a single aim: victory for life.

To find out more about the association The Friends of the Jules Bordet Institute, go to the website www.amis-bordet.be
To find out more about the "101 tables pour la vie", go to the website www.101tables.com