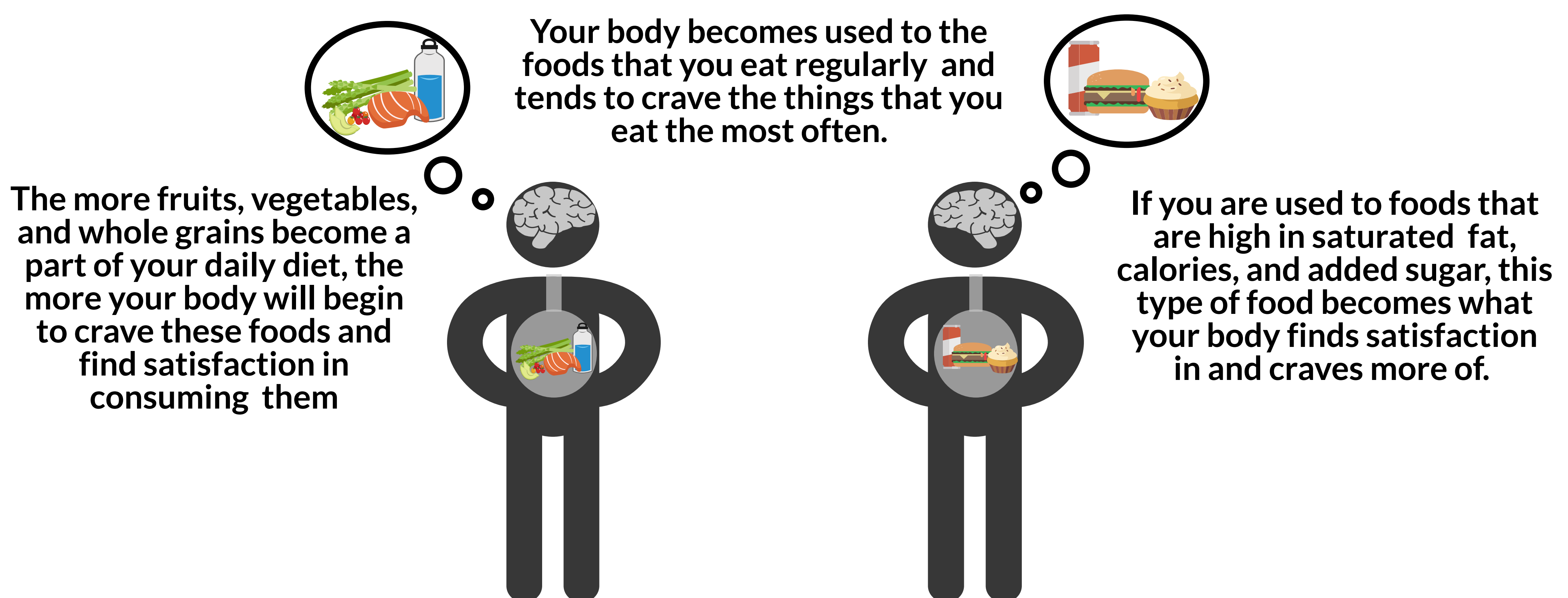


Why Does Nutrition Matter?

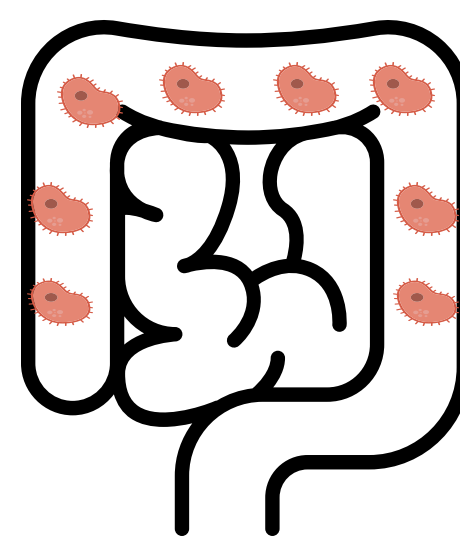
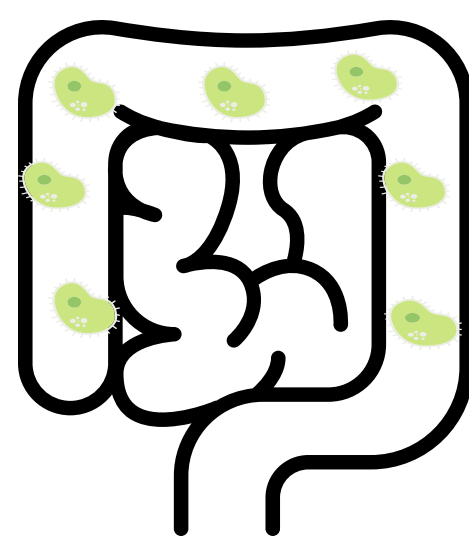
Nutrition refers to how the body uses food to sustain life, support healing, and maintain overall health. Optimizing nutrition during treatment not only helps to improve mood, increase strength and energy, and prevent secondary illness and infection, but also helps to prevent one of the most prevalent side effects of ALL treatment-- unwanted and excessive weight gain. Children and adolescents with a healthy weight prior to diagnosis are the most vulnerable to excessive weight gain during treatment, especially during maintenance therapy. When excessive weight gain occurs during early and later phases of therapy, it tends to continue even after treatment has ended, contributing to increased risk for the development of heart disease, high blood pressure, type II diabetes, stroke, and osteoarthritis later on in life. Unhealthy weight gain during treatment is also associated with increased side effects and poorer outcomes, making proper nutrition one of the most important aspects of therapy.

Although multiple factors may influence weight gain during treatment, studies show that consuming a diet that is low in simple sugars, saturated fats, and highly processed foods and high in whole grains, lean proteins, fruits, and vegetables plays a significant role in preventing unwanted weight gain.



The foods that we eat help to feed the billions of bacteria (probiotics) that live in our intestines. The types of bacteria that live in our intestines control our food cravings, metabolism, mood, and digestion.

Diets made up of whole foods like fruits, vegetables, and whole grains contribute to probiotic populations that are favorable to a healthy body weight.



Diets that are high in processed calories and added sugar contribute to probiotic populations that are favorable to unhealthy body weight.

Aspects of Healthy Nutrition

- **Focusing on Low Glycemic Index foods**
- **Reducing energy dense, ultra-processed foods and sugar-sweetened beverages**
- **Increasing intake of high fiber foods, protein, and healthy fats**
- **Avoiding excessive screen time and engaging in physical activity**
- **Practicing appropriate plate distribution and food portion sizes**
- **Understanding food labels**
- **Developing healthy habits for snacking and eating outside the home**
- **Practicing mindful eating**
- **Navigating picky or restrictive eating patterns**