

**Breakout session**

**LIVING BEYOND  
BREAST CANCER®**

# Nourishing strength

Managing energy and wellness through food

**Speaker:** Erin Pellegrin, RD, LDN





# NOURISHING STRENGTH

MANAGING ENERGY + WELLNESS  
THROUGH FOOD

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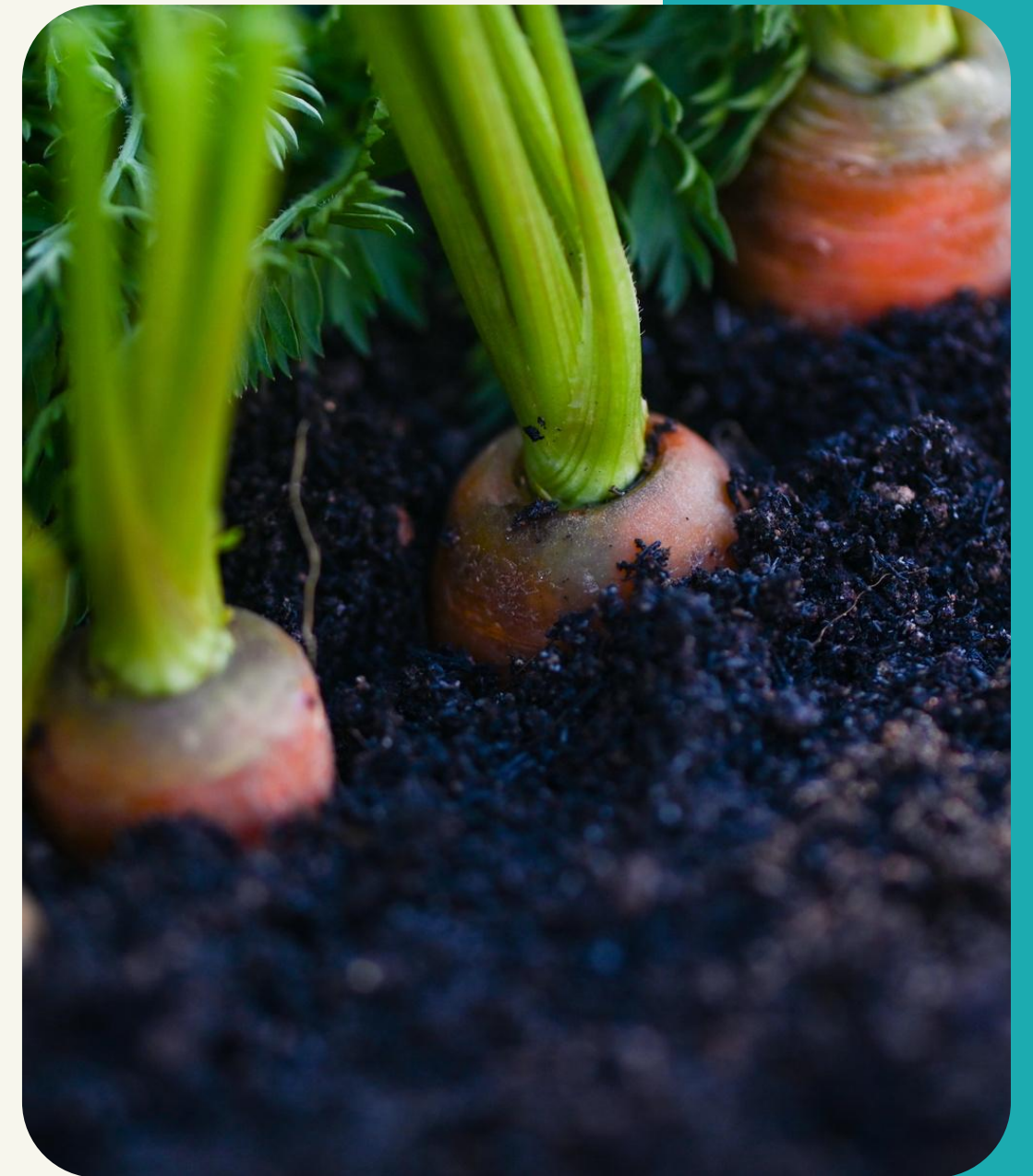
# TODAY'S GOALS

- ✓ Support energy + reduce fatigue
- ✓ Manage appetite + taste changes
- ✓ Ease digestive discomfort
- ✓ Navigate weight changes compassionately
- ✓ Emphasize flexible, realistic strategies



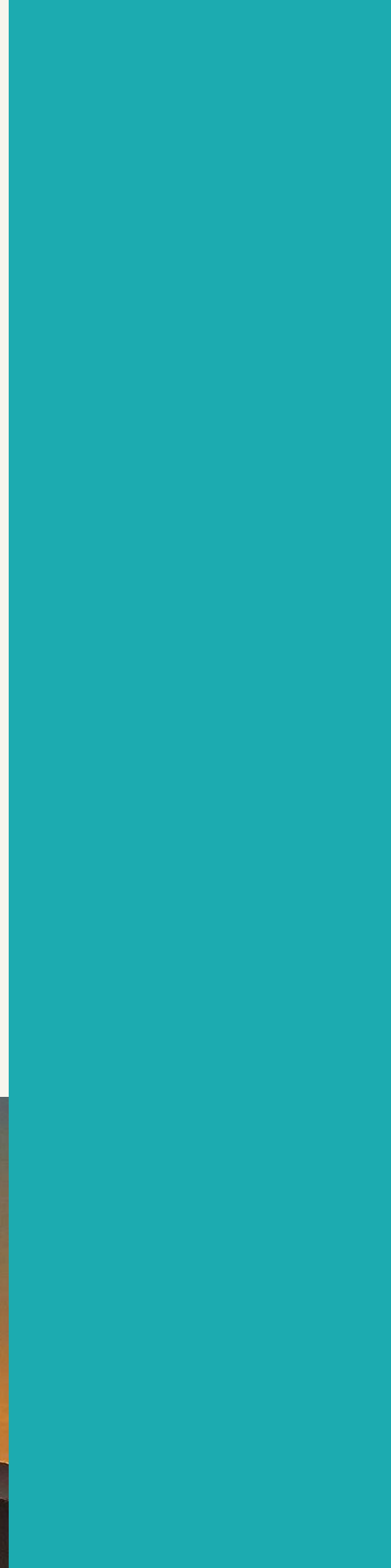
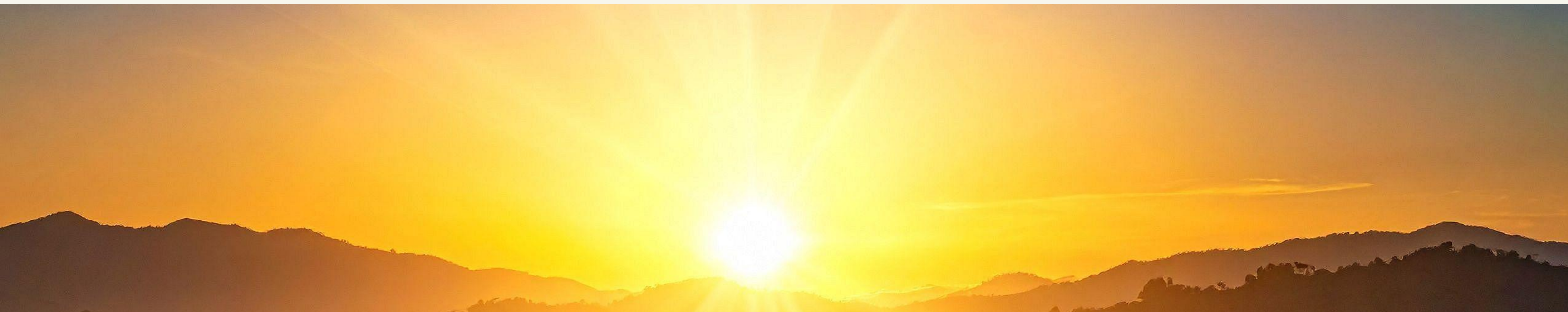
# WHY NUTRITION MATTERS

1. Treatment **increases** energy + protein needs
2. **Muscle preservation** supports strength + treatment tolerance
3. Nutrition is about **resilience** – not restriction





# ENERGY + FATIGUE





# UNDERSTANDING CANCER-RELATED FATIGUE

- Fatigue is not just tiredness
- Caused by:
  - Inflammation
  - Medications
  - Sleep disruptions
- Food supports steadier energy



# BUILD STEADIER ENERGY

- Eat every 3 – 4 hours
- Pair protein + carbohydrates
- Include healthy fats for staying power
- Small meals are OK

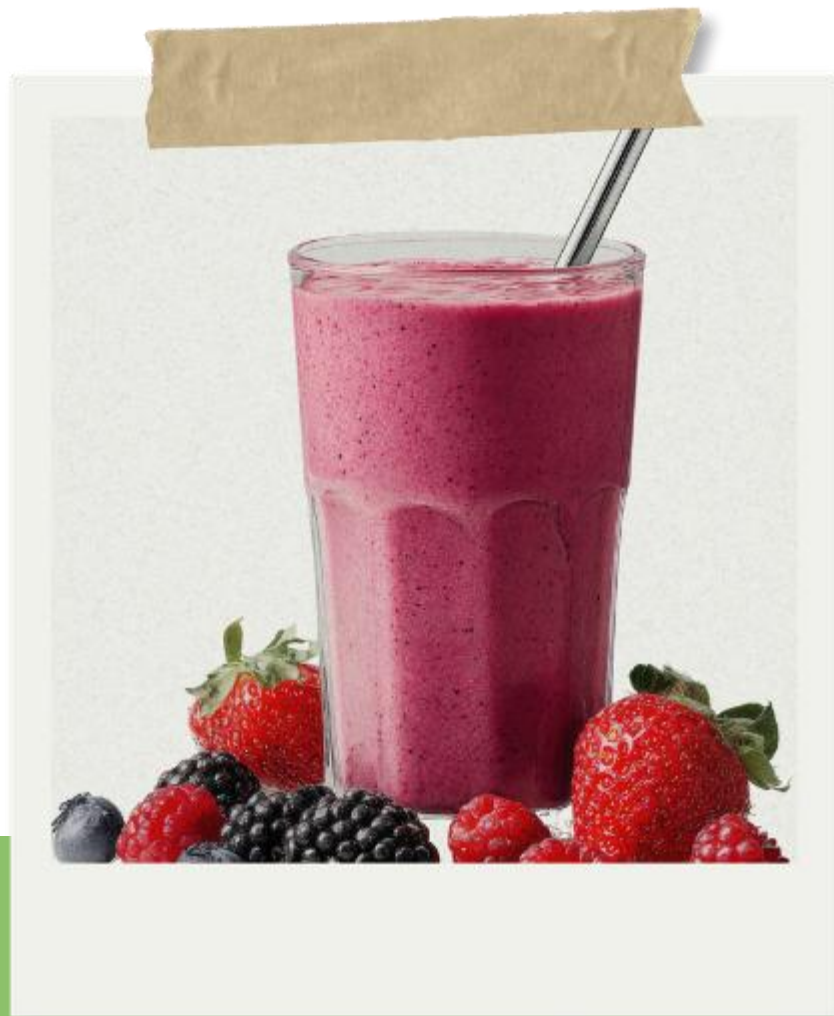


# PROTEIN = STRENGTH INSURANCE

- Include protein with each meal/snack
- Supports:
  - Muscle
  - Healing
  - Immune function
- Examples: Eggs, yogurt, beans, tofu, chicken, smoothies



# Recipes



Very Berry  
Avocado Smoothie



Bang Bang Salmon  
Bowls





# APPETITE + TASTE CHANGES





# WHEN APPETITE IS LOW



- Eat by the clock, not hunger
- Use smaller portions
- Add calorie boosters:
  - Olive oils
  - Nut butters
  - Avocado
- Smoothies can help





# MANAGING TASTE CHANGES

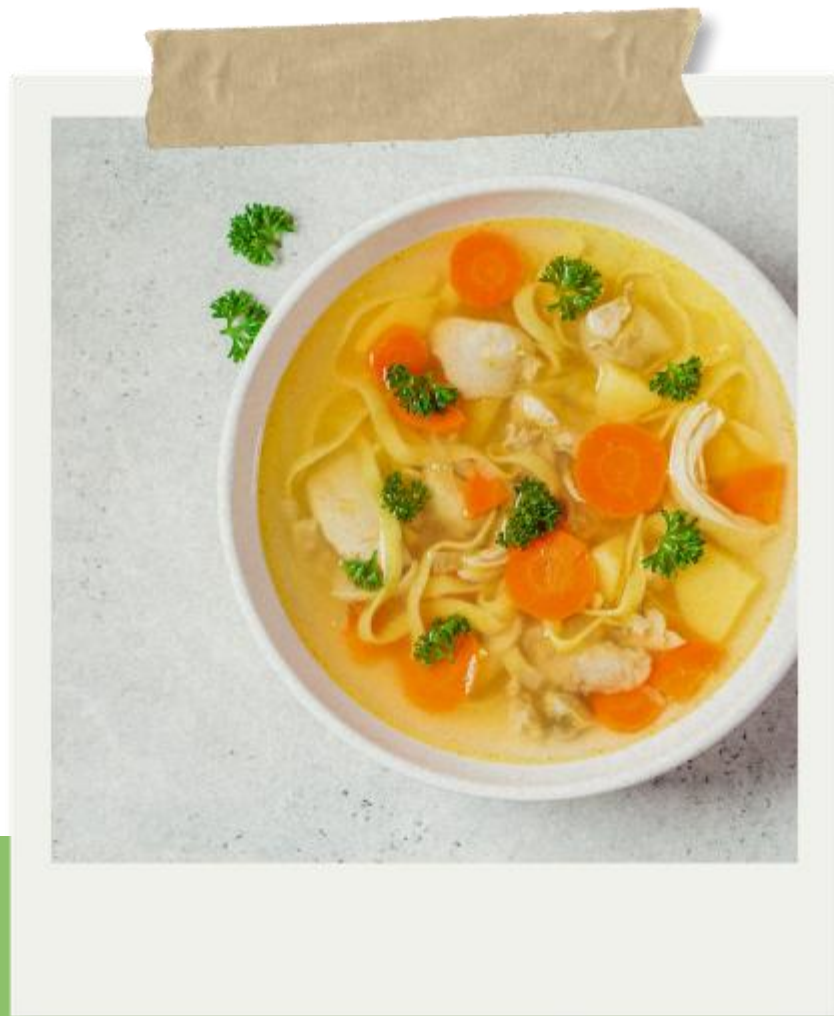


- Metallic taste → plastic utensils, tart flavors
- Bland foods → herbs, citrus, vinegar
- Meat aversion → eggs, citrus, vinegar
- Taste changes often fluctuate





# Recipes



Chicken Noodle  
with Turmeric and  
Coconut Milk

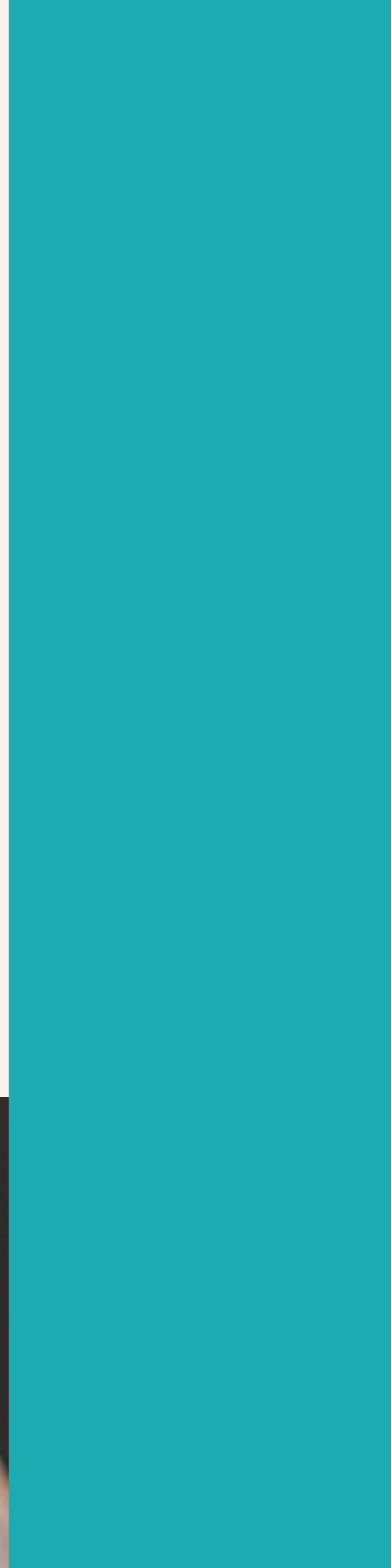


Spring Salad with  
Herby Vinaigrette





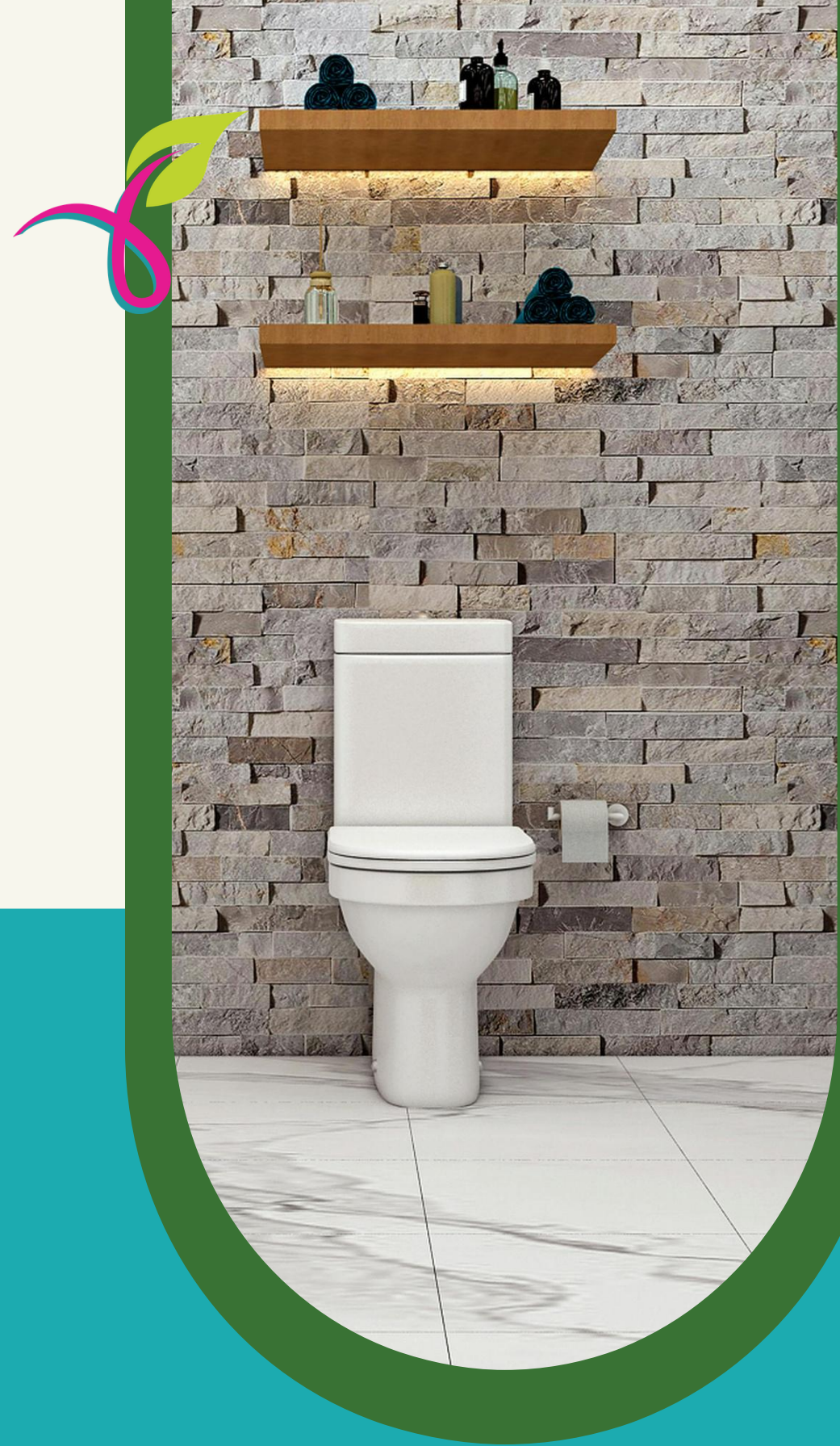
# **DIGESTIVE COMFORT**



# MANAGING NAUSEA

- Small frequent meals
- Dry or bland foods first
- Cold foods may be easier
- Ginger or peppermint may help





# CONSTIPATION + DIARRHEA

- Constipation → fluids + gentle fiber (oats, chia, kiwi)
- Diarrhea → hydrate + temporarily lower fiber
- Adjust intake based on symptoms



# Recipes



Ginger Greens  
Smoothie



Morning Glory  
Muffins





# WEIGHT CHANGES + BODY COMPOSITION





# WEIGHT LOSS + MUSCLE LOSS

- Focus on calorie-dense foods
- Prioritize protein
- Oral nutrition drinks are helpful tools
- Discuss ongoing weight loss with care team







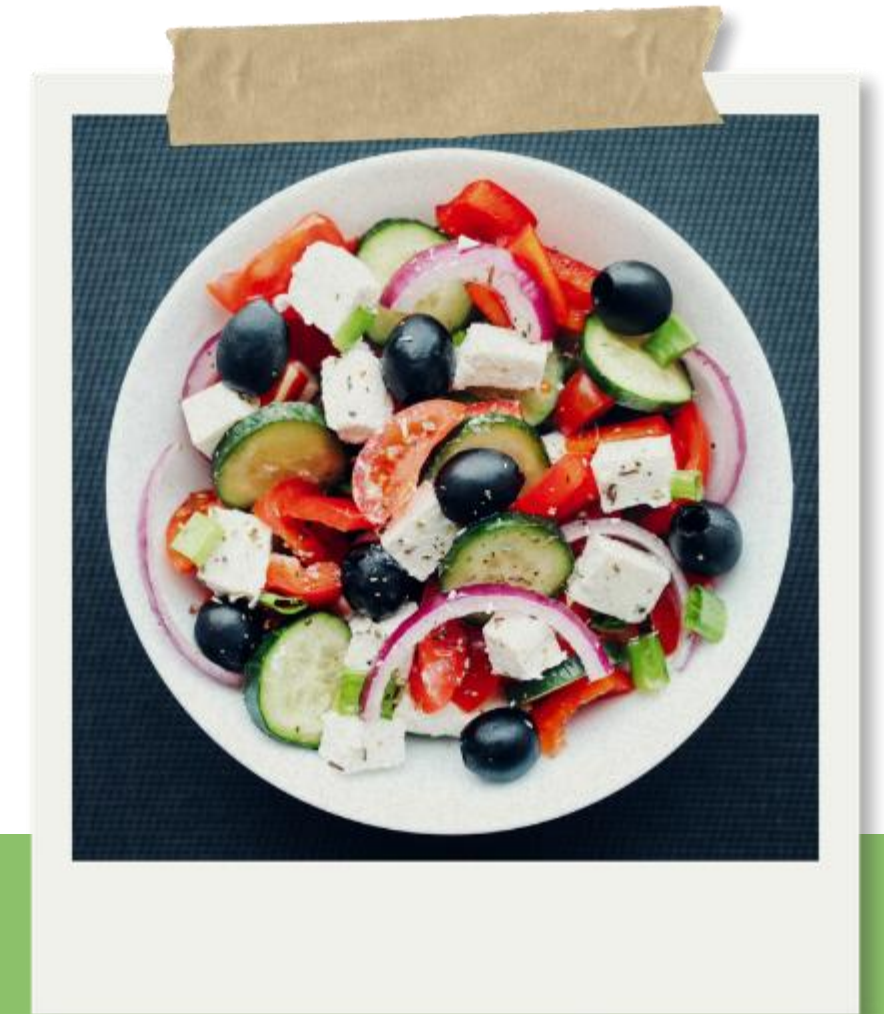
# Recipes



Meal Prep:  
Breakfasts

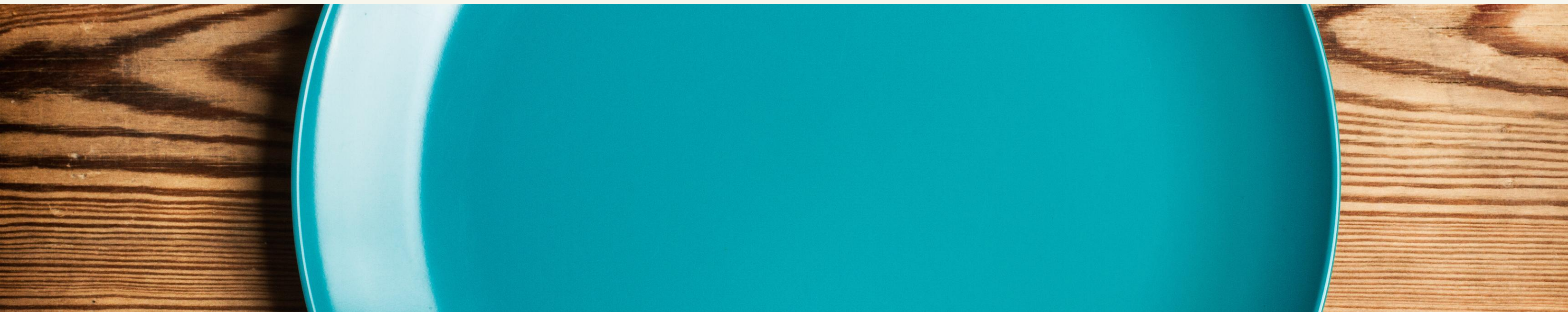


Meal Prep:  
Lunches





# **FLEXIBLE EATING APPROACH**





# LETTING GO OF FOOD GUILT

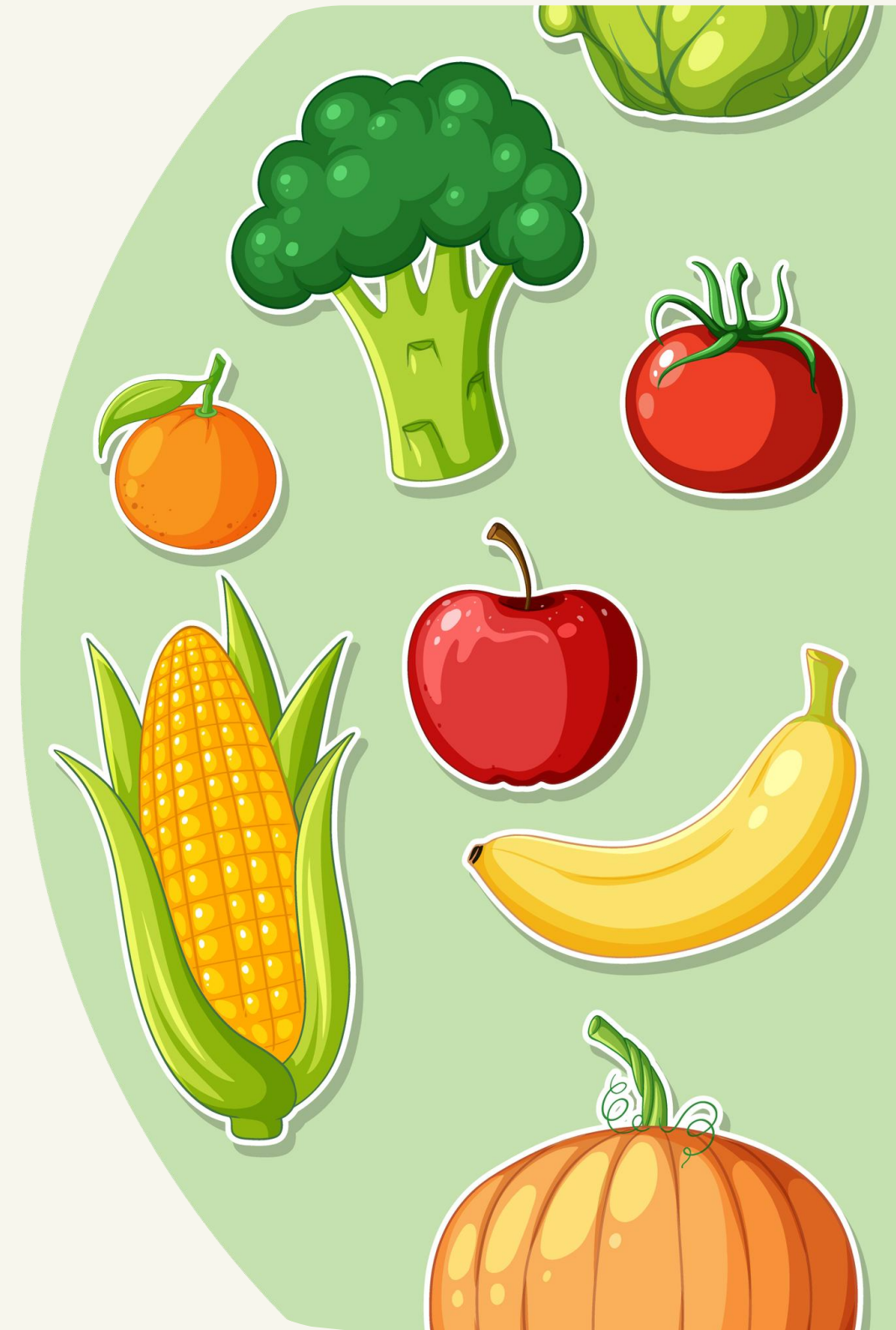
- No 'good' or 'bad' food days
- Some days are survival-food days
- Patterns over time matter more than single meals





# THE FLEXIBLE PLATE MODEL

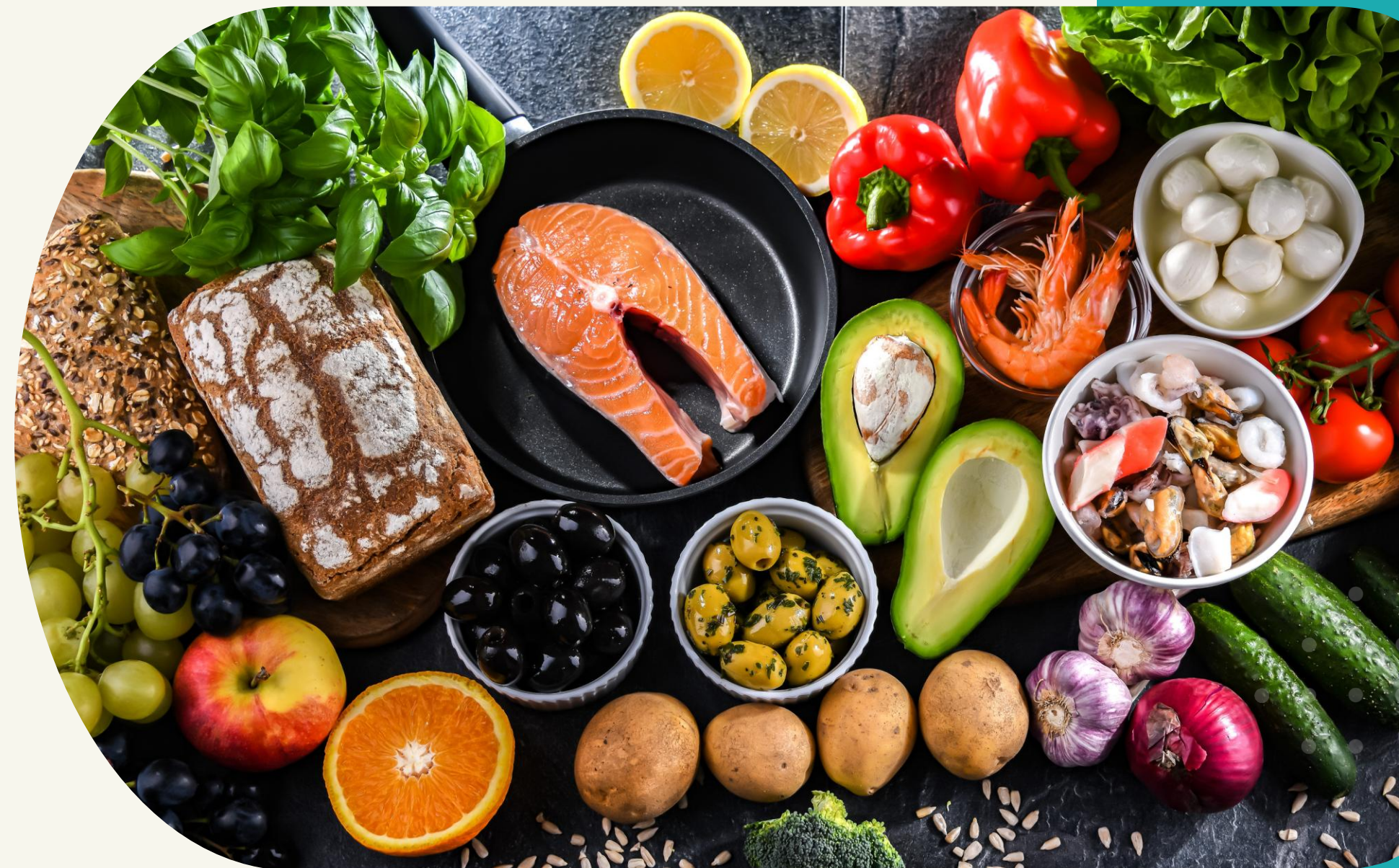
- Anchor with **protein**
- Add **color** when possible
- Include **carbohydrates + fats**
- **Adapt** based on how you feel





# ANTI-INFLAMMATORY EATING: WITHOUT RESTRICTION

- Focus on adding:
  - Fruits
  - Vegetables
  - Whole grains
- Include beans, nuts, olive oil + fatty fish
- Avoid extreme elimination diets





# FOOD + EMOTIONAL WELLNESS





# FOOD + EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

- **Appetite shifts** with mood + stress
- Food can provide **comfort**
- **Accept help** with meals
- Practice **self-compassion**



# BODY KINDNESS



- Treat your body with compassion, respect + gentleness
- An invitation to add positive practices:
  - Nourishing foods
  - Joyful movement
  - Rest
  - Self compassion
- An ongoing practice – not perfection
- Supports both physical + emotional health



# PUTTING IT TOGETHER





# A GENTLE DAILY FRAMEWORK

- Good days → 3 meals + 1-2 snacks
- Hard days → smoothies, soup, toast, nutrition drinks
- Both types of days are valid





# WHEN TO SEEK EXTRA SUPPORT

Ongoing weight loss

Persistent nausea

Difficulty swallowing

Fatigue limiting intake

Consult an oncology RD





# KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ✔ Food supports strength – not perfection
- ✔ Small frequent nourishment helps energy
- ✔ Protein protects muscle
- ✔ Flexibility matters most

SELF



CARE



# QUESTIONS + REFLECTION

- What feels hardest right now?
- What is one small change that feels doable this week?





**THANK YOU!**

