

Loss of Appetite

Loss of appetite is one of the most common problems that occurs with cancer and its treatment. Lack of appetite or interest in food may be related to nausea, vomiting, constipation, medicines, depression, pain, and loss of taste. Poor appetite lasting for many days can lead to weight loss and uncomfortable side effects. To make sure your body is working properly and responding to treatment, it is important to have a regular, balanced diet. Talk to your healthcare team if you have any questions about your diet or experience weight loss.

Things To Do

- Relax while eating
- Try light exercise, such as walking, to help increase your appetite
- Eat small meals and snacks frequently (every 2 hours)
- Chew slowly and thoroughly
- Drink liquids at least 30 minutes before or after meals (unless to help with dry mouth or swallowing) so they do not make you feel full while eating.
- Have meals at different times during the day and with different surroundings (change the tablecloth, eat with others, watch a television program, decorate your plate with garnishes).
- Eat more when you feel hungry. If you do not feel hungry, eat on a schedule around the same time every day so you do not miss a meal or snack.
- Add variety to your diet.
- Try high calorie, high protein snacks (i.e., hard-boiled eggs, peanut butter, ice cream, granola bars).
- Try eating more cold foods or foods at room temperature rather than hot foods if aromas of food bother you or make you nauseous.
- Add fresh fruits to pudding, yogurt, and milkshakes.
- If food preparation and odors make you feel nauseous, ask someone to prepare the meal for you.
- Place fans in the kitchen to help get rid of odors from food.
- Take any nutrition supplements (shakes, protein bars, protein powder, etc.) as instructed by your healthcare team.

Things To Avoid

- Eating quickly
- Drinking liquids while eating
- Eating in the same place every day
- Foods with “empty calories”, or little nutritional value (soda, fast food)
- Foods and food preparation that make you nauseous

If you are in need of immediate assistance, please call 732-235-2465 and select the option that best meets your needs.