



Nutrition Tips for Loss of Appetite

Problems such as pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or a sore or dry mouth may make eating difficult and cause you to lose interest in eating. Depression, stress, and anxiety may also cause loss of appetite. If your appetite is no longer motivating you to eat, you may need to plan your meals.

- **Eat by the clock** rather than by your hunger mechanism. For example, eat because it is 9 am, noon, 3pm, 6pm or whatever is realistic for your daily pattern.
- **Snack between meals.** Choose high-calorie puddings, shakes, high-calorie / high protein drink supplements, sandwiches with avocados, nuts, cream soups, cooked cereals & vegetables with added butter / margarine or fruit preserves. Use extra oil in salads or any dish that is cooked.
- **Plan for special circumstances.** If you have to miss or delay a meal for a test or therapy, bring a snack of nuts, dried fruit, or cheese and crackers. Ask your dietitian if these foods fit into your medical diet.
- **Plan your daily menu in advance.** Make a list of your favorite foods and beverages and prepare a shopping list. Have the food available. You may want to portion out snacks and keep them in the refrigerator in ziplock bags so that they are readily available.
- **Enjoy help in preparing your meals.** A friend or relative is often happy to help out by preparing food for you. Some grocery stores have computer-shopping services, or web-van type services that can be of help. You are very important – ask for help when you need it, and ideally before you anticipate that you will need it.
- **Fix several portions** of your favorite foods and freeze them. This can make it easier to decide what to eat when your appetite is poor or you do not feel like cooking.
- **Make food visually appealing.** Eye appeal is often the first step in eating. Attractive colors and garnishes such as parsley, lemon wedges, olives, and cherry tomatoes help to enliven the appetite.
- **Appeal to your sense of smell.** Tap into the sense of well-being that smells can stimulate, such as the smell of fresh bread baking. If you find that you are overwhelmed by smells at this time, stay away from the kitchen, and have someone else prepare the food.
- **Make your mealtimes pleasant.** Your mealtime atmosphere is important to encourage eating. Set the table; add candles or music. Whenever possible, eat with family or friends.
- **Distractions** can be very helpful! Watch TV, read or sit outside and watch nature while you are eating or drinking. This helps take the focus off of the food or fluid needing to be consumed.
- If your loss of appetite is severe and prolonged, talk to your doctor about **appetite stimulants** (Megace, Marinol, Remeron, medical marijuana).
- **Caregivers:** Remember... a smaller portion is best to start with. Let leftovers be available.

5/2014