

Tips To Help Overcome Common Eating Problems

Loss of Appetite

- Eat 5-6 small high calorie, high protein meals per day.
- Serve small food portions on a small plate.
- Take advantage of "GOOD" days to increase your food intake.
- Make mealtimes a pleasant and relaxing experience.
- Use time-saving meals that require little or no preparation such as ready-to-eat prepared dinners, mixes and casseroles.
- Light exercise may stimulate your appetite. Check with your physician beforehand.
- Keep a variety of nutritious snacks handy for nibbling.
- Limit the use of low-calorie foods such as coffee, tea, water, gelatin, fruits and vegetables.
- Drink calorie/protein-containing fluids such as whole milk, juice and shakes like SCANDISHAKE® Calorie Rich Shake Mix.

Nausea and Vomiting

- Do not eat several hours before chemotherapy or radiation therapy.
- Eat 5-6 small high-calorie, high-protein meals per day.
- Eat and drink slowly.
- A clear liquid diet may be tolerated best at first such as non-acidic fruit juices, fruit drinks, clear sodas, gelatin, tea, broth and popsicles.
- Have 8-10 cups of fluid per day to prevent dehydration.
- Dry crackers, melba toast, soda crackers, salty foods and ice-cold drinks are often well tolerated.
- Avoid overly sweet, greasy/fried, heavily spiced or strong-smelling foods.
- Avoid mixing hot and cold foods at the same meal.
- Rest quietly after eating in an upright position. Avoid lying down for at least 2 hours.
- Wear loose clothing. Fresh air may be helpful.
- If nausea/vomiting persist, medication may be beneficial. Consult your healthcare professional.

Mouth and Throat Problems

- Many patients receiving chemotherapy, radiation therapy or other drugs can develop mouth and throat sores, dry mouth, swallowing difficulties and/or taste changes.

Dry Mouth or Swallowing Difficulties

- Eat moist foods.

Sip on juices, other fluids or ice chips throughout the day.
Make solid foods easier to swallow by adding gravies, broth, sauces, mayonnaise, yogurt, melted butter and salad dressings.
Eat casseroles, soups or stews.
Dry foods can be dipped in beverages or other liquids.
Take a swallow of liquid before each bit of food.
To stimulate saliva release, try sugarless hard candy, sugarless gum, tea with lemon, lemonade or sour balls.

Sore Mouth and Throat

Choose soft/liquid type foods such as macaroni and cheese, mashed potatoes, stew/soups/casseroles, milk shakes, cottage cheese/ricotta and custard/ puddings, yogurt, scrambled eggs, cooked cereals.
Make solid foods easier to swallow by adding gravies, broth, sauces, mayonnaise, yogurt, melted butter, salad dressings.
Avoid spicy, salty and acidic foods like chili pepper, citric fruits and juices.
Try foods chilled or at room temperature.
Use a straw to drink beverages or liquids.
Drink calorie-containing beverages such as SCANDISHAKE® with meals.

Taste Changes

Cancer and its therapy can cause a loss or change in taste. Antibiotics, pain relievers and other drugs can also alter your taste of foods. Red meats, coffee, tea, salty and sweet foods tend to be more offensive.

Try a variety of foods.

Do not give up on foods. What is off today may taste normal next week.
If red meats taste *bitter*, you can substitute chicken, turkey, eggs, fish, ham, peanut butter, cheese, beans, milk shakes, yogurt, or pudding/custard. Marinate foods before cooking using soy sauce, fruit juices, wine, beer, Italian dressing, barbecue sauce or sweet and sour sauce. Use tart foods such as oranges or lemonade, vinegar or lemon juice to enhance the flavor of foods.

To overcome a *metallic* taste, try fruit-flavored sour balls or other tart foods. Plastic utensils and dishes may be helpful.

Add sugar to decrease the saltiness of foods.

Add salt to decrease the sweetness of sugary foods.

Add a few drops of lemon juice to a sweet beverage to cut the sweetness.

Add bacon bits, sliced almonds or onion to vegetables or use spices and condiments to accent or flavor bland foods.

Foods will taste better when chilled or frozen. Use tuna, ham, egg or pasta salad and milk shakes as an alternative.