

# Improving Your Appetite

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## Try these ideas to improve your appetite:

- Make your meal look good by using a colourful place mat, table cloth or napkin. Place a flower or candle on the table. Change these often. You deserve the best.
- A meal with different colours and shapes, and hot and cold foods, looks good to eat. Chicken with brown rice, carrots and sliced tomatoes looks better than chicken with white rice and parsnips.
- Foods will taste better if you add herbs and spices.
- If possible, dine by a window to get some sunlight and fresh air in the summer. Choose a comfortable chair to sit in when you eat. If you are eating meals in your bed or in a big chair, prop yourself up with pillows so that you can see your food and eat easily.
- Try to get some fresh air every day. If you can't get outside, open a window briefly to allow stale smells to leave and to let in fresh air.



- When the weather is nice, try to eat some meals outside on a balcony or bench.
- Do some physical activity — even a little bit can help make food taste better.
- Some medications can cause a bad taste in your mouth and take away your appetite. Cinnamon or mint gum or candy may help take away a bad taste in your mouth. Also, you can brush your teeth or rinse your mouth with water or with a mouth rinse, before and after you eat.
- Try this mouth rinse: 1/4 teaspoon of baking soda mixed into 1 cup of water.
- An occasional small glass of wine before or with a meal may help. Talk to your doctor.
- Try starting your meal with a tart drink such as tomato juice.
- Eat small meals, but eat more often. Have your meals and snacks at regular times.
- Keep easy-to-make and favourite foods on hand and in sight.

For more ideas, see Handouts – Cooking for One or Two, and How to Gain Weight.

- Are you bored by your meals and foods? Look at some cookbooks for ideas or talk to your Home Care worker about meal ideas. Buy different foods to add variety.
- Watching TV or listening to the radio might make eating alone easier.
- Share a meal with a friend, neighbour or family member.
- Its nice for a change to eat out at a restaurant, senior centre, or a meal program at an apartment block or personal care home. If you need a ride, call your local seniors' centre and ask them if they offer rides.
- Some extra meals could be ordered in, for example, Meals on Wheels. Or, you might want to order in Chinese food or a pizza.
- Getting out more often may improve your appetite overall. Talk to friends or call the senior centre to find out if there is anything going on that interests you.

## Ideas to cope with nausea

- Try one of these:
  - clear, cold drinks such as ginger ale or apple juice
  - a popsicle
  - soda crackers, melba toast, dry toast or arrowroot biscuits
  - banana or canned fruit
  - sweetened tea
- Try drinking your liquids half an hour before or after you eat your meals.
- After meals, rest, sitting up. Wear loose clothing.
- Sometimes when you are not feeling well you may not want to smell the food cooking. You may not want to have cooked meat. Having ready-made foods and cold foods may be better. Try cold sliced meat, bland cheese, cold hard-boiled eggs, peanut butter or white canned beans. Rather than hot cooked roast beef with a potato, have cold sliced meat with a piece of bread. Try a milkshake with some dry toast. If you are cooking, open the window for fresh air.
- You may need pills for your nausea. Talk to your doctor.
- As you are feeling better, add other foods to your diet.