

# Appetite Changes



“Many days I’m just not hungry. I find it easier to eat 5 small meals, instead of 3 big meals each day. My nurse told me about foods that can help me keep up my strength.”

## What are appetite changes?

Two common changes you may notice are feeling less hungry and finding that some foods may taste different.

- **Eat well to help your body stay strong.**
- **Let your doctor or nurse know if you lose weight.**

## Try these tips to make eating easier:

### Set meal times and routines.

Eat a little, even if you’re not hungry.

- It may help to eat 5 or 6 small meals each day, instead of 3 large meals.
- Try new foods to keep up your interest in food.
- Eat with family or friends, or watch television while you eat.
- Choose foods that are high in calories or protein like those listed on the back of this sheet.
- Ask your doctor or nurse about seasonings that may help some foods taste better.
- If food tastes like metal, eat with plastic forks or spoons.

### Be active.

Being active may help you feel more hungry.

- Take a short walk each day.
- Talk with your doctor or nurse about exercises that can help you.



### Drink liquids.

Getting enough to drink is important, but don’t fill up on liquids during meals.

- Drink milkshakes or soups that are easy to swallow.
- Keep track of how much you eat and drink each day. Then talk with your doctor or nurse to make sure you are eating and drinking enough.

## Keep this list on your refrigerator.

**Eat more of these foods and drinks that are high in calories or protein.**

Soups	Drinks	Main meals and snacks	Sweets	Extras
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cream soups</li> <li>• Soups with lentils or beans (such as black, kidney, pinto, or red)</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some instant breakfast drinks</li> <li>• Milkshakes</li> <li>• Fruit smoothies</li> <li>• Whole milk</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chicken</li> <li>• Lentils or beans (such as black, kidney, pinto, or red)</li> <li>• Eggs</li> <li>• Fish</li> <li>• Nuts, seeds, and wheat germ</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Custard</li> <li>• Ice cream</li> <li>• Muffins</li> <li>• Pudding</li> <li>• Yogurt (plain or vanilla)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Butter, margarine, or oil added to foods</li> <li>• Cottage cheese, cream cheese, and sour cream</li> <li>• Some liquid meal replacements</li> <li>• Peanut butter</li> <li>• Powdered milk added to foods</li> </ul>

**Ask your doctor or nurse what foods and drinks are best for you.**



### Questions to ask your doctor or nurse:

1. What problems should I call you about?
2. What foods should I eat?
3. Are there high-protein drinks or vitamins that can help me?
4. How much water, or other liquids, should I drink each day?
5. What exercises can help increase my appetite?



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### How can we help?

#### National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service

**Phone:** 1-800-422-6237 (1-800-4-CANCER)

**Web:** [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)

**Online Chat:** [www.cancer.gov/livehelp](http://www.cancer.gov/livehelp)

**NCI has a series of 18 Chemotherapy Side Effects Sheets at:**

[www.cancer.gov/chemo-side-effects](http://www.cancer.gov/chemo-side-effects)

