

Food is an enjoyable and social part of life but this can diminish during illness. Maintaining an interest in food and drinks can be a positive step to maintaining strength for other activities and general enjoyment. It is important that a reduction in food and other food difficulties do not become another stress at difficult times. Make the best of good days and try not to worry about poorer days. There are some things you can do which may help your intake. You can also discuss any issues with your GP e.g. pain, constipation, diarrhoea, nausea etc.

Poor Appetite?

Start with Breakfast – this can help to stimulate your appetite for the rest of the day.

Have a breath of fresh air before meals and avoiding cooking smells may help.

Eating in company can help improve the amount you can manage.

If easily put off food, try eating little and often.

Drinking fluid just before a meal can fill you up, try drinking at the end of a meal.

Enhance the taste of food by using herbs, spicy, marinates – strong tastes may be better.



Feeling Sick?

Keep up fluids, have regular sips of water or flat lemonade, drinking through a straw may be helpful.

Avoid fatty/greasy/spicy foods if this makes nausea worse.

Some people find ginger helpful e.g. ginger biscuits, ginger tea, ginger ale etc.

Dry/salty foods might be tolerated better – toast, biscuits, crisps, soup etc

Cold foods like jellies, ice-lollies, yoghurt, mousses, cold meats, cheese or salads might be easier to take.

Try not to lie down straight after eating.

Dry/Sore Mouth?

Very hot or very cold foods, spicy, salty or acidic foods e.g. pickles, onion, curries, vinegar, lemon and orange may irritate your mouth more.

Be cautious of course foods like crisps, muesli, nuts or crispbread etc as these may jag your mouth and cause more pain.

Soft, moist or liquidised foods may be easier to swallow e.g. custard, yoghurt, mousse, mashed potato, mashed vegetables, mince, stews, crumbles, ice-cream, ice-lollies etc can be soothing.

Try to keep your mouth moist with sips of fluid, sucking ice-cubes, ice-lollies etc.

Try to keep your mouth fresh and clean - clean your teeth with a soft toothbrush after eating, artificial saliva sprays, pastilles, gels and lip balms.

Take pain relief if required.



Needing more nourishment?

Try to manage what you can and fortify food where possible (add cream, butter, cheese etc to soups, sauces, puddings, potatoes, fruit etc). Frying foods can also increase the calorie content without eating any extra food. Be generous with margarines, butter, jams, spreads, mayonnaise, dressings etc. Use ready meals, if it is easier. Avoid using low calorie, low fat or diet products as standard foods will give you more calories.



Milkshakes and Smoothies – mix your own using 300mls of whole milk, 4 dessertspoons of dried milk powder, 4 dessertspoons of double cream and 30mls of milkshake syrup. You can do this along with any combination of fruit, ice-cream and/or full fat yoghurt – sweeten with extra glucose, sugar, honey or syrup if you wish. You'll find readymade smoothies or milkshakes such as Yazoo or Nesquik in supermarkets, there are also 'own brand' versions which can be cheaper. You can also buy a nutritional supplement drink called Complan over the counter in chemist or some supermarkets.

