

Loss of appetite.

Not feeling hungry, and not wanting to eat is very common in cancer. It can be related to the actual cancer, treatment side effects or stress. It's important to keep trying to eat, to maintain body weight and meet nutrition needs.

Tips to increase appetite

- Include some gentle exercise to boost appetite.
- Avoid drinking 30 minutes before meal times. Save the stomach space for food!
- Cooking smells can sometimes spoil the appetite. Avoid these by:
 - » Having someone else prepare food
 - » Preparing and eating food outside or with a window open
 - » Preparing food in advance
 - » Having easy-to-prepare foods in the freezer ready to go
 - » Choosing cold foods (they have less smell)



Eating when we don't feel hungry

- Food is important for nourishing our bodies, especially when we are unwell. It can help to think of eating as part of the treatment.
- Eating smaller meals, more often can be easier to manage.
- Make it enjoyable - choose favourite foods, eat outside or put some music on.
- Choose a nutritious snack or drink if a meal doesn't seem manageable.

When we do feel hungry

- Take advantage of these times! It doesn't matter if we eat "dinner foods" at breakfast, or dessert first.
- Have meals and snacks available that are ready to go with no preparation (e.g. pantry snacks or frozen foods).
- Make every mouthful count:
 - » Boost the energy and protein in a meal by including ingredients like cheese, eggs, peanut butter, olive oil etc.
 - » Choose "easy to eat" foods that don't require too much chewing (e.g. cooked vegies over raw vegies, soft bread over crackers)

