



I've lost my appetite.

Sometimes we can lose our appetite or interest in eating

There are many reasons why people eat less than usual, even if they aren't trying to. These include illness, medical treatment, fatigue, pain, stress, grief and depression.

While you may not feel hungry, it is still important to eat. This will help you to maintain your strength and get the nutrients you need to stay well.

Try these ideas to keep you eating well and encourage your appetite to return.

Eat regularly through the day

To keep your energy levels up and encourage hunger cues to return.

- Aim for five to six smaller meals across the day instead of three larger meals.
- Try not to miss meals. This can make you feel more unwell.
- If you don't feel like eating, sip on a drink that is high in energy and protein.
- If your appetite is better at certain times of the day, plan to eat at these times.
- Increase your appetite before a meal by going for a short walk, if you can.
- Try to eat by the clock, eg every two hours during the day. Don't wait to feel hungry.
- Take snacks with you when you are out of the house for longer periods of time.

Make every mouthful count

- Choose food and drinks high in energy and protein. See the 'High energy high protein foods' and 'High energy high protein drinks' factsheets for ideas.
- Add extra energy and protein (eg oil, milk, cheese, spreads and milk powder) to food and drinks.
- Have food high in protein with each meal and snack.
- Instead of having drinks at mealtimes, try having them between meals. Drinking fluid can make you feel full, leaving less room for your food.



- Choose high energy drinks. Instead of filling up on water or tea, have milky drinks, fruit juices, cordial or soft drinks.

Make eating enjoyable

- Eat your favourite foods at any time of the day (eg breakfast foods at dinner).
- Eat meals with other people if you can. Allow family and friends to help with shopping and cooking.
- Listen to music at mealtimes.
- Soft foods that need less chewing may be easier to eat.
- Have snacks nearby that you enjoy.
- Have a meal at a café or a favourite restaurant.
- Serve foods in a fun and appealing way. Or try serving your food on a smaller plate.

Something is better than nothing

- When your appetite is low it is not the time to focus on eating “healthy foods”.
- Any food that you can tolerate is better than having no food at all.
- Eat a variety of foods that are tasty and enjoyable, even if they are foods you would usually only eat sometimes.
- Have ready-prepared meals and snacks on hand for times when you don’t feel up to cooking.
- Once your appetite has returned to normal, you can go back to eating a variety of healthy foods.

Healthy Ageing Tasmania

 health.tas.gov.au/healthyageing

 community.nutrition@health.tas.gov.au

Funded by the Australian Government Department of Health.

Visit the Department of Health website (www.health.gov.au) for more information.

