

ARE YOU EXPERIENCING CHANGES TO YOUR TASTE?



What causes taste changes?

Taste changes can be caused by cancer itself or occur as a side-effect of treatments that you or a loved one may be receiving. Changes to taste can be upsetting some and can make eating and drinking less enjoyable. Food may no longer taste how it used to and you might find that you can no longer tolerate foods that you once enjoyed. Taste changes may also impact how much food you eat and it's important to consider the impact taste changes may be having on your overall nutrition.

In lots of cases, normal taste comes back in the months after treatment. Some people may experience longer-term changes. These changes may differ from person to person; some people might find food tastes metallic or too salty, while others might find foods taste very bland. There are some tips below and overleaf to help you manage taste changes. **Always speak to your dietitian, doctor and/or nurse about concerns regarding your taste and overall nutrition.**

TIPS for Managing Taste Changes



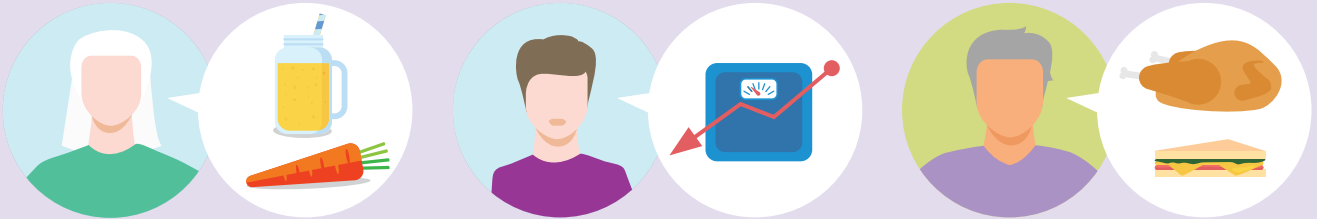
- 1 Before eating, try rinsing your mouth with tea, saltwater or baking soda to help clear your taste buds.
 - 2 Chewing fresh, tinned or frozen pineapple may help to get rid of bad tastes in your mouth.
 - 3 Brush your teeth or rinse your mouth regularly (but not too close to meals).
 - 4 Try sucking on mints.
 - 5 Cook with foods that develop little flavour: pasta, rice, potatoes.
 - 6 Try cold foods/meals.
 - 7 If you choose "ready-to-use" products, choose those with little salt (less than 0.3g of salt per 100g) and without sodium glutamate, as these two flavour enhancers may amplify the bad taste in your mouth.
 - 8 Cook red meats with hard cheese (such as Emmental), either in pieces or grated, to mask the metallic flavour and choose white meats, fish or eggs.
 - 9 Try rinsing your mouth with vinegar water throughout the day.
 - 10 Some drinks might leave a bad taste in your mouth. Try decaffeinated tea/coffee or different flavours of juice or squash.
- 1 If you have a **metallic taste** in your mouth; try using plastic cutlery
 - 2 If food tastes **too sweet**, choose "natural" products, without added sugar or sweeteners (yoghurts, sorbets, etc.)
 - 3 If food tastes **bland**; use herbs & spices to add flavour, try marinating protein foods (meat, fish, chicken), avoid extreme temperatures which reduce the flavour of food, cook your vegetables and starches in a small amount of water to concentrate their taste or combine sweet and savoury flavours (meat with grapes, prunes, honey etc.)
 - 4 Some people also experience changes to their sense of smell, which is linked with our taste. You may find certain smells bother you, while others may notice any change to their sense of smell. If you are sensitive to smells, try to avoid the kitchen while food is cooking. If you are cooking for yourself, ready meals might be a good idea. Cold foods also tend to smell less strong so might be a good option.

KEEPING YOURSELF FUELLED

Nutrition is important at every stage of your cancer journey



Nutrition is important at every stage of your cancer journey; before, during and after any treatment. Maintaining your weight and muscle strength can help limit the side effects of treatment and contribute to better quality of life. As taste and smell changes can impact nutritional intake, it's important to try to keep an eye on how you've been eating and feeling and to watch out for weight loss.



Go for the foods that appeal to you and smell good



Remember that the foods which taste or smell good may change throughout your cancer journey. Avoid foods which are no longer appealing to you. Don't be afraid to try some of these foods again in a few weeks, as you may find that you begin to enjoy them again.



Speak to your dietitian, doctor or nurse



Speak to your dietitian, doctor or nurse about any concerns you have about your nutrition. If you have been recommended to take an Oral Nutritional Supplement by your dietitian, doctor or nurse, ask them about sensory adapted flavours which have been designed specifically for people experiencing taste changes related to cancer.

