

HOW I FEEL TODAY:

I've got no appetite, I don't feel like eating

WHEN THINGS ARE NOT GOING WELL:

- Try 5-6 small, frequent meals or snacks rather than 3 large meals, and eat what you fancy wherever you feel like it
- Nourishing drinks or smoothies made with milk, yoghurt or ice-cream might be easier than a meal
- If drinks fill you up too much, try having them after your meal or snack
- Take time to chew each mouthful before swallowing or use easy to chew foods. Sitting upright during a meal and just after may help
- Try a quiet, relaxing atmosphere but if that doesn't help, some people find a distraction like chatting to family or watching TV better. Eating with a friend or family member can help
- A strong flavour might help stimulate your appetite – something spicy, sweet or even bitter
- Think positively about what you've eaten and try not to give yourself a hard time that you've not finished a whole meal
- Being active can help your appetite, try a gentle walk
- Sometimes we lose track of how long things have been difficult for. Make a plan. "If this is still a problem in two days' time I will call my doctor." You'll feel more in control.

[Download the Wellness Diary.](#)

ON A GOOD DAY:

- Notice if you are eating well and feel good about it. We often focus on when things are not going well. Noting the good days can support positive feelings about food and eating
- Take your time and enjoy what you are eating
- If you feel up to it try something a little different, it will add variety to your diet and avoids meals becoming monotonous
- Stock up on the snacks that you enjoy most so that you have them to hand on days when your appetite is poor. Don't feel guilty about having snacks or treats that might you ordinarily consider less healthy such as chocolate or ice cream, they can be a useful source of energy
- Plan for days when you know your appetite will be poor e.g. during or after treatment

HOW I FEEL TODAY:

I've got no energy, it's too exhausting to prepare a meal

WHEN THINGS ARE NOT GOING WELL:

- Ask friends and family to help shop and cook, they will be pleased to be able to help
- Ready-made meals are fine to use, as are canned foods. Try creamy soups, baked beans, puddings or pies
- Sugary foods give a quick energy boost but it doesn't last long. Wholegrain foods are better as they release energy slowly. Try wholemeal bread, wholegrain pasta and cereals, or brown rice
- Sandwiches are quick to make. Use a protein rich filling like egg, cheese, fish or meat and add extra calories with an oil-based spread to make them more nutritious
- Nut butters, eggs, beans or cheese on bagels, toast or flatbread make a quick snack
- Ready-made [nourishing drinks](#) are available
- Try a slow cooker, preparing the meal when you have more energy and letting it cook ready for eating later in the day when you are tired and don't have the energy to cook. Slow cooked meals in sauces are also great for making in large quantities and then freezing for another day.

ON A GOOD DAY:

- Make a bit extra of dishes you enjoy and chill or freeze for another day
- Check the store cupboard and make a shopping list of easy to prepare, quick meals and snacks that you can keep on hand for not so good days
- If you feel up to it, get out to the shops for some fresh air and exercise. Shopping for your meals might be one of your goals and keep you connected with the outside world.

HOW I FEEL TODAY:

WHEN THINGS ARE NOT GOING WELL:

ON A GOOD DAY:



Nothing tastes right

- Cancer and cancer treatment can affect the way foods taste. It is often temporary but can be very marked when it occurs. Food can taste metallic, too sweet or salty or have little taste at all (bland)
- If food tastes metallic try plastic or wood cutlery, avoid canned food, metallic cooking pots and utensils
- Add herbs and spices, celery, onion, ginger or garlic to dishes for a stronger flavour
- Strong sauces may be useful like mustard, vinegar, lemon juice and dressings for salad. Try marinating foods in lemon juice or lime juice and olive oil before cooking and serve with a salsa or sweet and sour sauce or dressing
- Cold foods may be better or try a different texture; crunchy nuts or seeds as a topping or crispy crackerbreads
- If your mouth is sore it may be best to avoid spicy foods, chilli and hard crunchy foods
- Drink plenty of fluids and keep your mouth clean as a dry mouth can affect your taste
- Retry foods from time to time as your tastes may change, or consider new foods that you may not have liked in the past

- Notice what tastes good today and make a note of it, over time you'll build up a handy list to refer back to which makes meal planning easier
- On a good day when you have more energy experiment with different flavours, you may discover something new that will help on a day when eating is more difficult

HOW I FEEL TODAY:

I feel sick, even smelling food makes me feel sick

WHEN THINGS ARE NOT GOING WELL:

- Nausea can be caused by cancer, cancer treatments or pain-relieving drugs. Speak to your healthcare professional as soon as possible. They may be able to check your drug therapy, offer anti-sickness medication or advise on timing of medication to help keep nausea under control
- If you can't eat try a nourishing drink or try eating at another time
- To reduce cooking smells, try a ready-made meal, ask someone to cook while you are in another room or open windows to let in plenty of fresh air
- Family and friends can often get anxious when they see you struggling to eat. You may find they become overly focussed on encouraging you to eat and drink. Whilst they have good intentions it may feel like extra pressure. Explain to them that the best way to help today may be by making small portions or something that can be used another day

ON A GOOD DAY:

- Make a list of foods and drinks that you find easier to take when feeling sick, share it with friends or family who want to help. It may change day to day, so they can help by shopping for or cooking foods that will store easily (e.g. in the freezer)
- Share with others that it's going well, let them know that today you've really enjoyed what they prepared. Even if it's a dish they brought round a few weeks ago for the freezer! Send a text or call, they'll love hearing that you enjoyed it

HOW I FEEL TODAY:

I am constipated, I feel full all the time and it's putting me off my food

WHEN THINGS ARE NOT GOING WELL:

- Constipation (passing small amounts of hard stools less frequently) can be uncomfortable and can make you feel full or sick. It can be caused by some cancer treatments and some drugs. Speak to your healthcare professional as soon as possible.
- Not eating enough fibre can also cause constipation so if you haven't been advised to avoid or reduce fibre, try including fruits, vegetables, wholegrain cereals, bread, pasta or brown rice. Nuts, pulses, seeds are also good sources¹
- Too little fluid can make constipation worse especially if you have increased your fibre intake. Aim to drink about 2 litres a day but talk to your doctor or dietitian if this is difficult. Remember all fluids count – tea, coffee, squash, milk and nourishing drinks
- Keeping active can also help keep bowel movements regular, try a gentle walk

¹ If you have bowel cancer or a tumour causing an obstruction in your bowel this advice may not be appropriate, speak to your healthcare professional for individualised advice

ON A GOOD DAY:

- Take advantage of feeling good and include fruit, vegetables and wholegrains in your diet today
- Drink plenty of fluids to help keep stools soft and easier to pass
- Note what helped you to feel better, was it a change in medication, a different dose of laxatives or eating something different? Keeping a note to refer to when times are not so good is useful