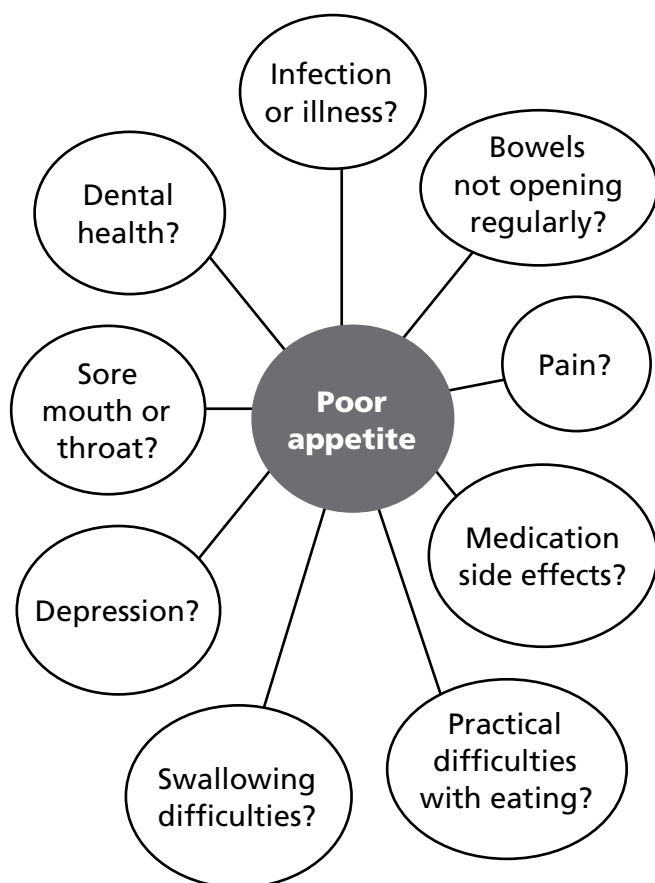


Tips for Improving Your Appetite

Contact dietitian: Telephone no:

Food is a useful medicine. It contains valuable energy needed to help keep strength up and recover from illness. It also gives us many different vitamins and minerals to help the body repair itself.

For those who are experiencing loss of appetite, it is worth considering if there are any physical reasons for this...



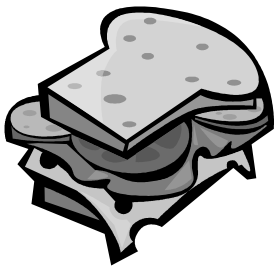
If you feel that you, or somebody you care for, has any of the above issues, it may be worth discussing this with your/their GP.

A poor appetite can lead to weight loss, a lack of energy, a reduced ability to fight infections and impaired concentration. There are things which can be done to help:

- **Small frequent meals** – take something small every 2–3 hours during the day. Try not to get out of the habit of eating as you need to eat to stimulate your appetite. Make food and drinks as nourishing as possible.
- **If you are unable to manage a meal** – try a milky drink such as a malted hot drink, milky tea or a milkshake.
- **Relax** – take your time and enjoy what you eat. Eat slowly and chew your food well.
- **Maximise your intake** – make the most of the times when you feel hungry. Some people find that breakfast is a good time so perhaps try something cooked.
- **Fresh air** – may stimulate appetite so try to go for a quick stroll or spend time in the garden before meals.
- **Well ventilated room** – lingering smells can put people off their food.
- **Loss of interest** – people can lose interest in food once it has gone cold. You may find that it takes longer to eat due to problems using cutlery or swallowing. If this is the case try insulated plates which keep food warm for longer, or serve half portions and keep the remainder warm until the first portion has been eaten. A microwave could be used to reheat food during a meal.



- **Alcohol** – a small glass of wine, sherry or a favourite drink half an hour before a meal may boost your appetite (ensure you check with your GP first).
- **Nibbles** – keep snacks at hand such as biscuits, cakes, cheese and crackers, scones, fruit, yoghurts, sandwiches, crisps, nuts, mini sausage rolls or quiche.
- **Involvement at meal times** – try to be involved either with preparing food, if you are able, or laying the table. These tasks can help you to remember that it is time to eat and should also help you to maintain your skills and independence.
- **Change in taste** – be aware that this can happen. You may start to reject food that you have always eaten or enjoy dishes that you have never liked. Try to pick foods that you fancy at the time.
- **Avoid drinking with meals** – this can fill you up and spoil your appetite.
- **Herbs or spices** – try adding to dishes to enhance flavours of foods.



If you are still concerned about your appetite and/or have experienced some unplanned weight loss, please speak with your GP or dietitian.

Tips for carers

- **Positive encouragement** – offer prompts and assistance as needed when the person you are helping is eating – every extra mouthful helps.
- **Presentation** is very important! Use bright and colourful options to increase appeal, and try not to overload the plate with too much food. Only serve one course at a time.



- **Likes and dislikes** – if you are caring for somebody, establish which food and drinks they enjoy, and find out the times when they like to have their meals. Try to be flexible when possible.
- **Mix unusual food combinations** – be prepared to do this. Some people may enjoy meals that are a little different from the 'norm', such as adding sugar to savoury foods, for example, an omelette or vegetables for those who have a sweet tooth.
- **Re-name common dishes** – this can help people see new and exciting foods which may be worth trying.

