

Tips for Managing Decreased Appetite While on Chemotherapy

Things you can do on your own



Adjust your eating habits:

- Eat small meals throughout the day, rather than three larger meals
- Eat foods that you enjoy
 - Remember no raw/undercooked/half cooked or overnight food if you are on chemotherapy or immunosuppressive treatments
- Some food may not taste the same during chemotherapy, food with stronger flavors may be more appealing
- Take oral nutritional supplements as per your dietician

Develop strategies to feel hungry:

- Incorporate daily exercise (like going for a walk) into your routine
- Move your bowels regularly, as constipation can make appetite worse

Other symptoms resulting in loss of appetite:

- Oral ulcers
 - Try topicals e.g. choline salicylate (e.g. bonjela) or triamcinolone (e.g. oracort E) to help relieve pain from oral ulcers
 - Take foods that are softer
- Nausea, vomiting (see relevant page)
- Constipation (see relevant page)

When to seek medical attention



- If you have not been able to eat or drink anything for 12 or more hours
- If you have symptoms of dehydration e.g. feeling giddy or lightheaded
- If you are having other symptoms that make it difficult to eat, such as:
 - Abdominal pain
 - Trouble or pain with swallowing
 - Choking whenever trying to drink or eat



Scan the QR Code with your smart phone to access the information online or visit <https://nhghealth.com.sg>

Department of Oncology
PECC-ONC-ED-2025-2081-v1

© Tan Tock Seng Hospital, Singapore 2025. All rights reserved. All information correct as of September 2025. No part of this document may be reproduced, copied, reverse compiled, adapted, distributed, commercially exploited, displayed or stored in a database, retrieval system or transmitted in any form without prior permission of Tan Tock Seng Hospital. All information and material found in this document are for purposes of information only and are not meant to substitute any advice provided by your own physician or other medical professionals.