

Appetite Loss



Réseau de
cancérologie
Rossy

Rossy
Cancer
Network

Symptom Management Tip Sheet



Let's talk about appetite loss...

- Appetite loss is when you lack feelings of hunger. Though you may not feel like eating, it is important to try to reach your calorie, protein, and liquid needs.
- If you are concerned that you are not eating well or not eating enough, speak to your healthcare team.
- Ask your healthcare team how carefully you need to follow your specific dietary plan.

** If you are undergoing IMMUNOTHERAPY and have these symptoms please contact your healthcare team as soon as possible. Delays can increase side effects and toxicity.*



What you can do

- Try eating 5-6 small meals.
- Sit upright for 30-60 minutes after eating to help with digestion.
- If odors bother you, try foods that are cold, with less smell.
- Try cooking with fewer spices (onion, garlic, or condiments that might bother you) until you can tolerate them.
- Eat more when you feel most hungry.
- Eat foods that are higher in protein and calories (such as eggs, nuts, meat)
- Drink high energy/protein drinks (Ensure, Glucerna).
- Stay active (try walking 15-20 minutes 1-2 times/day).



Additional help

- If getting groceries and preparing meals is difficult, try buying pre-prepared food or making a large amount of food and freezing it in smaller portions.
- Ask friends/family for help.
- Consult with a dietician. They may be able to recommend new strategies.

Based on: Remote Symptom Practice Guides for Adults on Cancer Treatments © 2020 D Stacey for the Pan-Canadian Oncology Symptom Triage and Remote Support (COSTaRS) Team. University of Ottawa School of Nursing and the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute, Ottawa, Canada.

Other resources

Food and Meal ideas

<https://bit.ly/bccancer-appetite>
Taking Care During Chemo
<https://bit.ly/cancer-chemocare>

Managing Appetite Loss

<https://bit.ly/cco-appetite>
More resources at
mcgill.ca/rcr-rcn/patient

Who can help

Nurse Navigator (IPO)

If you have one, please speak with your IPO

Dietician

Ask your doctor or nurse for a referral

This information should not be considered as medical advice. It is not to be used in place of a visit with a doctor, nurse or other healthcare professional. If you have questions about your individual medical situation, please consult with your healthcare professional.

If you are getting treatment at:

▪ Oncology Clinic, call:

Symptom Management Hotline

514-340-8222 ext. 25529

Mon – Fri. 8h00-16h00

Nights/Weekends: 514-340-8232

▪ Radiation Oncology Clinic, call:

514-340-8222 ext. 24124