

## Managing loss of appetite as a result of radiotherapy

You may lose your appetite as a result of your treatment, medicines or your disease. Maintaining your diet is important. It helps to keep your strength and energy levels up, it boosts your immune system, it can improve your mental state of wellbeing and, most importantly, it prevents unnecessary weight loss.

### Some practical tips to help you to eat if you have lost your appetite

- Try to eat 'a little and often'. Make sure you start the day with breakfast. This is often when your appetite is at its best.
- Make the most of the times when you have a good appetite by eating well and treating yourself to your favourite foods.
- Snack between meals. This is especially important if you can only manage small meals.
- Try to eat a wide variety of foods.
- Eat foods that are high in calories.
- If food smells are a problem, or are preventing you from eating, try eating more cold foods, or ask someone else to cook for you.
- Tempt your taste buds by making foods look as attractive as possible.
- Before your meals, stimulate your appetite with some fresh air or a little exercise, like a gentle walk.

### Dietary suggestions to increase your usual calorie intake

- Milkshakes are a useful source of protein and make good snacks between meals.
- Use full fat dairy products. Milk can be fortified by adding milk powder.
- Fresh fruit juice is a valuable source of vitamins, particularly if you are not eating much fruit.
- Yoghurt-based smoothies are easy to make and packed with protein, vitamins and calcium.
- Add cream or cheese to soups or casseroles.
- Snack on nuts, fresh or dried fruit, crisps, biscuits, sweets or chocolate.
- Add honey, syrup, sugar or fruit liberally to cereals or porridge and enjoy as a breakfast meal or snack between meals.
- Try having desserts after meals and add ice-cream, cream or evaporated milk.
- Nutrition drinks used alongside a balanced diet can also help to increase your calorie intake.

## Further help

It may be possible to stimulate your appetite using prescribed medicines. Ask for advice from your consultant.

An appointment with a dietitian can be made at any time through your treatment radiographer. This is especially helpful for meal suggestions or if you are following any other diets such as a low fat diet or if you have diabetes.

## Support services

Radiotherapy treatment at Bupa Cromwell Hospital also includes eight counselling sessions. These are available for all patients and relatives.

## Contact

Should you have any concerns or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact us:

Radiotherapy reception 020 7460 5626/7  
Hospital switchboard 020 7460 2000

If the radiotherapy department is unavailable please contact the oncology ward on 020 7460 5992.

Bupa Cromwell Hospital Dietetics Department: 020 7460 5566

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