

Common Nutritional Problems

Dry Mouth

- Drink plenty of liquids, 8 -12 cups daily.
- Use moist, soft or pureed foods, which may be easier to swallow.
- Serve liquids with meals; have a sip of water every few minutes.
- Eat foods with sauces, gravies and salad dressings to make them more moist and easy to swallow.
- Use sugarless gum or hard candy to help produce more saliva.
- Try very sweet or tart foods and beverages such as lemonade to help your mouth produce more saliva (if you are not suffering from a tender or sore throat).
- Avoid spicy or acidic foods.
- If the problem is severe, ask your doctor or dentist about products that coat and protect your mouth and throat.
- Rinse your mouth often.
- Try “dunking” your foods such as cookies in tea, coffee or milk.
- Cut up meats in small pieces and add gravy to them; these foods may also be blended.
- Use a cool mist humidifier at night.

Strange Taste to Your Food

- If red meat does not taste right, use chicken, turkey, fish, cheese, and eggs instead.
- Marinate meat, fish, and chicken in Italian dressing, sweet-sour sauce, sweet fruit juices, or sweet wines.
- Try eating cold foods (cheese, egg salad, milkshakes) or foods at room temperature.
- Try new combinations and forms of food: fresh, frozen, canned.
- Experiment with texture, temperature, and seasoning variations. Try basil, oregano, rosemary, tarragon, lemon juice, or mint for stronger tastes.
- Sugar tones down salty and acid foods.
- Salt tones down sugar and acid foods.
- Tart foods may enhance flavor when used as seasonings, for example, orange juice, pickles, lemonade, and vinegar. Try sucking on lemon before eating.
- Drink more liquids (water, tea, ginger ale), and eat additional fresh fruits and hard candies to take away the strange taste.
- Use plastic utensils.

Too Tired to Eat or Fatigue

- Eat well during “up” times.
- Prepare and freeze meals in individual portions ahead of time whenever possible.
- Stock pantry and freezer with favorite foods to avoid energy and time spent by frequent trips to grocery store.
- Use convenience, ready-to-eat, easily prepared food. Use disposable dishes, pans, and foil containers.
- Use timesaving appliances: blender, electric frying pan, toaster oven, crock-pot, food processor, microwave oven, and dishwasher.
- Let friends and relatives help or try “Meals on Wheels” or similar service.

Feeling Full Too Fast or Early Satiety

- Chew slowly.
- Avoid greasy, fried foods and rich sauces.
- Avoid drinking liquids during meals. Instead drink liquids between meals, one hour before or after eating.
- Drink liquids of high nutritive value such as milk, fruit juices, and vegetable juices.
- Take breaks during mealtime.
- Eat foods high in starch and sugars.
- Eat small meals and/or nutritious snacks more often.

Mouth & Throat Problems

- Use plenty of liquids - especially in foods. Drink 8 -12 cups a day. Moisten all foods.
- Choose soft foods or use a blender. Heat food before blending, and then add sauces, gravy, and margarine.
- Avoid coarse, rough, or dry foods.
- Cold foods, such as custard, yogurt, cottage cheese, milkshakes, ice cream, frozen yogurt or pudding, and popsicles, should be used. Avoid extremely hot foods.
- Drink foods from a cup or use a straw.
- Tilt head back and forth while eating.
- Avoid spicy foods or those high in acid. Remember: smoking and alcohol further irritate the mouth and throat.
- Drinking warm bouillon or salty broth can soothe throat pain.

Cramps, Heartburn & Bloating

- Eat slowly in a relaxed atmosphere.
- Eat small snack-like meals.
- Avoid gas-formers: cabbage, cauliflower, broccoli, onions, garlic, nuts, beer, cola, garlic, too many sweets and cooked dried beans.
- Avoid fried, greasy or heavily spiced foods.
- Do not lie down until 2 hours after eating.
- Try bland, low fat, easily digested foods.
- Take chilled antacids 1 hour and 3 hours after meals, at bedtime, and upon waking in the middle of the night.
- Avoid chewing gum and using a straw. This can help prevent gas formation.

Nausea & Vomiting

- Eat small meals frequently. If you eat smaller portions of low fat foods, be sure to eat more often to make up for calorie-protein needs.
- Eat before you get hungry, hunger can make feelings of nausea stronger.
- Chew thoroughly and slowly.
- Take prescribed anti-nausea medicine ½ -1 hour before eating.
- Avoid favorite foods during nausea.
- Avoid drinking liquids at meal times. Sip clear, cool liquids through a straw between meals. ½ -1 hour before eating.
- Rest after meals with head elevated at least 4" higher than feet.
- Low-fat foods or foods either cold or served at room temperature may reduce problems with nausea and vomiting.
- Avoid hot, spicy, strong smelling, fried, or greasy foods.
- Dry, salty foods may help. Try toast or crackers soon after getting up in the morning.

- If at specific times nausea and vomiting occur, avoid eating at these times.
- Getting fresh air, wearing loose clothing, and avoiding unpleasant odors may also lessen problems with nausea and vomiting.

Constipation

- Eat high fiber foods for meals and snacks: whole grain breads and bran cereals, fresh fruits and vegetables, dried fruits, nuts, popcorn, cooked beans (red, navy, kidney, pinto, black, garbanzo), and peas.
- Try adding 2 Tbsp. of bran to cooked cereals, eggs, casseroles, and baked goods.
- Drink 8 -12 cups of liquid daily. Try prune juice or hot lemon water early in the morning or at night.
- Try light exercise, such as walking.
- Check with your doctor before taking a laxative or stool-softener.

Diarrhea

- Eat small meals frequently.
- Avoid high fiber food (especially food with seeds and tough skins, beans, broccoli, corn, nuts, onions, garlic, whole grain foods) and greasy foods. Eat only cooked fruits and vegetables.
- Increase use of potassium and sodium-rich foods. Potassium and sodium are lost in great quantities with diarrhea. Foods high in potassium that don't cause diarrhea include bananas, peach and apricot nectar, and boiled or mashed potatoes. Sports drinks contain both potassium and sodium along with easily absorbable forms of carbohydrate.
- Avoid greasy or fried foods if they make your diarrhea worse.
- Limit food and drinks that contain caffeine such as coffee, some colas, and chocolate.
- After a sudden attack of diarrhea, try a clear liquid diet during the first 12-14 hours to let your bowel rest. Examples of clear liquids include bouillon, clear carbonated beverages, cranberry/grape juice, fruit ices without fruit pieces or milk, honey, jelly, Jell-O, popsicles, sports drinks, tea, and water.
- Consume liquids between meals - not at meals. Try juices, but avoid milk or milk products until diarrhea subsides. Drink beverages at room temperature; avoid very hot or cold beverages.
- Do not skip meals. Get plenty of rest.