# Tips to Help with Taste Changes

## Why do taste changes happen?

Many people find that cancer and cancer treatment changes the way their food tastes. These changes can vary from person to person and from week to week. The following tips may help you cope with taste changes:

* Try a variety of flavors, temperatures and textures. Don’t give up on foods. What tastes “off” today may taste normal next week.

* Eat foods that taste good to you. Keep a list of these foods.

* Avoid foods that taste bad. Replace them with other foods so you still eat well.

* Check your mouth daily for new sores or spots or coatings.
* Follow the mouth care instructions from your nurse or doctor.

## What can I do about odors affecting my taste?

* Eat foods at room temperature or cold such as:
  - tuna salad
  - egg salad
  - chicken salad
  - pasta salad
  - deviled eggs
  - ice cream
  - milkshakes
  - pudding or custard
  - cheese
  - cottage cheese
  - yogurt

* Use a fan while cooking.
* Drink from cups that have a lid.
* Keep pots covered.
* Use a microwave to cook foods.
* Open a kitchen window.
* Use prepared foods or take-out.

## What should I eat if foods taste bitter?

* Eat foods at room temperature or cold.

* Try mild tasting foods such as:
  - vanilla pudding
  - perogies
  - hot cereal
  - rice
  - milk
  - plain crackers
  - mashed potatoes
  - custard
  - plain noodles
| What should I eat if foods taste like metal? | *Eat room temperature or cold foods.  
*Try tart flavored foods, beverages or candies.  
*Marinade meat or poultry using fruit juices, Italian dressing, teriyaki sauce, soy sauce, sweet and sour sauce, wine or barbecue sauce.  
*Use plastic utensils instead of stainless steel.  
*Cook with glass cookware instead of metal.  
*Try fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables rather than canned.  
*If red meat tastes bad, try other protein foods such as:  
  Yogurt  
  Cheese  
  Milk  
  Milkshakes  
  chicken or turkey  
  fish  
  beans |
|---|---|
| Can I do anything if foods have no flavor? | *Try sour or tart foods. These may stimulate taste.  
*Use barbecue sauce, mustard, ketchup, soy sauce or hot sauce to add flavor.  
*Add herbs, spices, onion, garlic, or bacon for extra flavor.  
*Try foods with strong flavors such as:  
  -pizza  
  -spaghetti  
  -marinated meats or meats with sauces  
  -salsa  
  -pickles or olives  
*Try fruit or coffee flavored shakes|
| What can I do if foods taste salty? | *Try low sodium versions of foods.  
*Add a small amount of sugar to foods such as soups, juices, cottage cheese, mashed potatoes, tomato sauce, casseroles, or gravy to help decrease the salty taste.  
*Try tart flavored foods and beverages.|
| What can I do if foods taste too sweet? | *Dilute juices, milkshakes or supplements by adding water, soda water, milk or ice to them.  
*Add a small amount of salt to foods such as puddings, ice cream or milkshakes to help decrease the sweet taste.  
*Try tart flavored foods and beverages.|
| Other Resources | If you would like more information, or to talk to a dietitian, please call 410-955-8152. |