

Loss of Appetite

Nutrition Fact Sheet



Loss of Appetite

When one has a reduced desire to eat, or no desire to eat at all. Continued loss of appetite is of major concern and should be discussed with your doctor and dietitian.

Problems With Loss of Appetite

With continued loss of appetite and decreased food and beverage intake, problems such as malnutrition (loss of nutrients), dehydration, wasting (extreme weight loss), vitamin and mineral deficiencies, diarrhea, and increased risk for opportunistic infections can occur. Weight loss of 5 pounds or more in one week needs to be discussed with your doctor.

Possible Reasons for Loss of Appetite

- Advanced HIV/AIDS and liver disease
- Alcohol consumption
- Anxiety/Stress
- Constipation
- Consumption of sugary beverages
- Delayed stomach emptying
- Depression
- Fatigue
- Hypothyroidism
- Increased viral load
- Infection/Illness
- Infections of the mouth
- Low testosterone level
- Medication/Side effects
- Recreational drugs
- Smoking
- Taste and smell changes
- Use of herbs
- Vitamin and mineral deficiencies

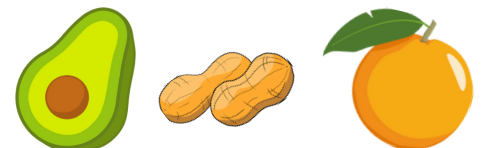


Food Records

Keep daily records of what, how much, and the time of day you eat and drink. Certain patterns or behaviors may appear that interfere with appetite or help with efforts to regain your appetite. Try not to skip meals or snacks; it may be necessary to set a timer to go off every 2-3 hours to remind yourself to eat. A few bites of food is better than none at all.

Ideas to Increase Appetite and Prevent Weight Loss

- Do some exercise to work up an appetite
- Eat in a pleasant setting and invite a friend to eat with you
- Speak to your doctor about an appetite stimulant
- Eat something every 2-4 hours
- Eat small amounts often
- Always leave the house with snacks
- Make sure to eat breakfast
- Avoid drinking liquids with your food (it can cause early fullness)
- Eat foods high in calories such as peanut butter, nuts, seeds, or avocado

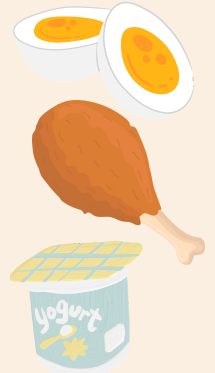


Loss of Appetite



Add the following to your meals for extra calories and protein

- **Cheese** to toast, tortillas, or crackers
- **Hard boiled eggs** to salads, casseroles, soups, potatoes, rice, vegetable dishes
- **Meat, fish or chicken** to soups, casseroles, pasta, omelets or sandwiches
- **Nuts or seeds** to cereal, yogurt, pudding, salads and vegetables
- **Beans, lentils and rice** to salads, pasta dishes, soups, casseroles and tortillas
- **Protein powder, yogurt, and avocado** to smoothies



Medication to Stimulate Appetite

It may be necessary to take a medication to stimulate your appetite. Megesterol acetate (Megace™) and dronabinol (Marinol™) are two drugs that increase appetite. Both of these medications have side effects and/or drug -drug interactions. Discuss them and other options with your medical provider to determine what is appropriate for you.

Marijuana (*Cannabis sativa*)

California has been at the forefront of marijuana policy in the United States since 1996, when it became the first state to establish a medical marijuana program. In November 2016, voters approved Proposition 64, making California the fifth state to legalize marijuana. Please speak with your doctor before considering marijuana use for loss of appetite.

High Calorie Recipe Idea - Overnight Oats

- ½ cup rolled oats
 - 1 cup whole or non-dairy milk
 - 2 tbsp nut butter
 - 1 banana, sliced
- Optional:
- Scoop of protein powder
 - Drizzle of maple syrup
 - Sprinkle of cinnamon




Calories: 625 kcal
Carbs: 79 g
Fat: 27 g
Protein: 21 g



For more information or fact sheets contact:

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