



Date: _____

Client's Name: _____

Registered Dietitian's Name: _____

Phone # 522-6237 ext- _____

Toll Free # 1-877-228-1822 ext- _____

Taste Changes

A change in taste may occur with chemotherapy or radiation treatment, especially when given to the head and neck area. This condition may also be brought on by the cancer itself or certain dental problems.

Your sense of taste may be lessened, or in some cases, intensified. This change in your taste can result in a temporary dislike of certain foods or beverages. Often these taste changes should get better after treatment ends.

Helpful Hints:



General tips

- Concentrate on the foods you enjoy the taste of and avoid those that do not appeal to you. Try these foods again in a few weeks, as your taste buds may have improved
- Have fluids with meals to cover the unpleasant taste of foods. Try drinking milk, non-acidic fruit juices (e.g. cranberry, 'low-acid'), herbal teas, iced tea or water flavored with sugar-free drink crystals
- Experiment with food temperatures. If you find the taste or aroma of cooked foods unpleasant, try cold or room temperature foods
- Experiment with cooking methods such as barbecuing instead of frying
- Use cups with lids (e.g. travel mugs) or drink liquids through a straw to avoid unpleasant smells
- Suck on sugar-free tart flavored candies or chew sugar free gum to mask a bad taste in your mouth. **AVOID** tart candies if you have mouth sores, cracked lips or a sore throat



Mouth care

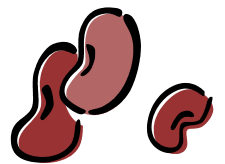
- Brush your teeth and tongue often using a soft toothbrush
- Rinse your mouth often throughout the day, especially before and after meals, with the baking soda and salt mouth rinse recipe below:

Recipe: ½ tsp (2 ml) baking soda and ½ tsp (2 ml) salt dissolved in 2 cups (500 mL) warm water. Discard the rinse after 24 hours.



If food tastes metallic

- Eat foods cold or at room temperature
- If you no longer enjoy red meat, replace it with other protein rich foods such as: chicken, turkey, fish, eggs, greek yogurt, cheese, cottage cheese, peanut butter, beans and legumes (e.g., baked beans, pea soup)
- Stew or marinate meat, chicken or fish in: store bought marinade, fruit juice, soya sauce, barbeque sauce, or salad dressings to improve flavours
- Wine, beer or mayonnaise added to soups and sauces may improve flavours. Consult with you doctor regarding alcohol use.
- Drink non-acidic orange juice or lemonade to help disguise a metallic taste. **AVOID** these beverages if your mouth or throat is dry or sore
- **AVOID** diet products containing Aspartame or Nutrisweet if you find they have a metallic taste
- Buy beverages stored in a glass or plastic bottle instead of a can
- Eat with plastic utensils or chopsticks instead of stainless steel utensils
- Use glass cookware instead of metal pots and pans
- Have fresh or frozen vegetables, fruit, and legumes instead of canned varieties
- Prepare homemade soup or buy soups in tetrapak containers or dried soup mixes rather than from a can



If foods taste overly sweet

- Dilute your drinks, such as juices or nutritional supplements
- Add a pinch of salt to decrease the sweetness of foods

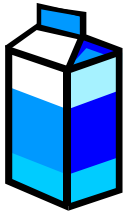
If foods taste too salty

- Eat low-salt or sodium-reduced products
- Add sugar to help mask the salty or acidic flavour

If foods taste strong or bitter

- Drink herbal teas such as peppermint tea, or coffee-like beverages such as Ovaltine® if regular coffee or tea no longer appeals to you

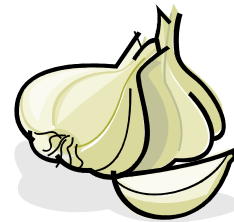
- Eat foods cold or at room temperature
- Eat mild tasting foods such as:



- Vanilla pudding
- Tea biscuits
- Bread soaked in milk
- Hot cereal with cream
- Steamed rice
- Milk-hot or cold
- Tofu
- Perogies
- Unsalted crackers & cream cheese
- Mashed or instant potatoes
- Custard
- Plain noodles with butter or oil

If foods taste bland after a few mouthfuls

- Add bacon, garlic, onion, or herbs like basil, rosemary or oregano to add flavour to vegetables
- Add spices, seasoning, sauces and marinades to add extra flavor to meat, fish and casseroles
- Tart foods may enhance flavours, however **AVOID** these foods and beverages if your mouth and/or throat is sore or dry. Remember to rinse with the baking soda and salt rinse after eating tart foods
- Enhance your taste buds by having alternating bites of different tasting foods within a meal
- Try some stronger flavoured foods, such as:
 - Spaghetti, lasagna or pizza
 - Marinated meats
 - Pickles, olives
 - Barbecued foods



If strong food odours affect taste

- Use a kitchen fan when cooking
- Use an outdoor barbecue grill
- Use a microwave
- Use covered pans
- Sit by an open window
- Order 'take-out'
- Ask family and friends to help with meal preparation
- Choose deli prepared foods (e.g. potato or pasta salad)
- Cold or room temperature foods may be better tolerated, as they have fewer aromas than hot foods.

