

## Loss of appetite and nausea

### Symptom Management

There can be many reasons why people lose their appetite or feel sick when they have cancer. In some cases, the cancer itself can suppress your appetite. For others it may be related to the side effects of the treatment or medication they are receiving.

#### What can I do?

- Avoid strong smells as these often make nausea worse.
- Dry toast or ginger biscuits may help to settle your stomach.
- Cold foods or foods at room temperature usually smell less than hot foods. You may be able to eat a main meal if you allow it to cool down to room temperature, as this will reduce the smell – you could also try tinned fruit, biscuits, dry toast, yoghurt, cereal, ice cream and so on.
- Remember to drink plenty – approximately eight glasses of fluid a day. Some people find sipping fizzy drinks such as ginger ale or soda water helpful. Try herbal teas that contain ginger.
- Avoid greasy foods as they can make nausea worse.
- Try to eat small amounts of food throughout the day, little and often, rather than having large meals.
- Anxiety can make nausea worse, so try to make meals as calm and relaxed as possible.
- Sucking boiled sweets, fruit sweets and mints may be helpful.
- Try to eat high calorie foods where possible, for example, full fat milk or cream.
- Please also see our information leaflet: [Eating well when you have cancer](#) on the Patient Information Library which provides further information about diet and problems that can affect eating.

#### When to call The Royal Marsden Hotline:

- If you are unable to eat or drink due to vomiting.
- You've vomited more than six times over 24 hours.

#### Contact us



**The Royal Marsden Hotline: 020 8915 6899**  
(available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week)

