# Improving appetite

There are many reasons people might lose interest in food. Illness, medical treatment, medication, fatigue and depression are all common reasons for people eating less than usual, even if they aren't trying to. Try these ideas to keep you eating well and encourage your appetite to return.

Once your appetite has returned to normal, you can go back to eating a variety of healthy foods.

## Eat regularly throughout the day

- Aim for five to six smaller meals across the day instead of three larger meals.
- Try not to miss meals. If you don't feel like eating, have a drink that is high in energy and protein.
- If your appetite is better at certain times of the day, plan larger meals at these times.
- Eat your favourite foods at any time of the day (e.g. breakfast foods at dinner).
- Eat whenever you feel hungry, even if this is not a normal meal time for you.
- Treat food like medicine- it is very important!
- Try to eat by the clock e.g. every two hours during the day.
- Take snacks with you when you are out for long periods of time.

## Make every mouthful count

- Choose foods and drinks high in energy and protein.
- Add extra energy and protein (e.g. oil, milk, cheese, spreads and milk powder) to foods and drinks.
- Have foods high in protein with each meal and snack.
- Instead of having drinks at meal times, try having them between meals. The fluid can make you feel full, leaving less room for your meal.
- Choose high energy drinks. Instead of filling up on water or tea, have milky drinks, fruit juices, cordial or soft drinks.
- Increase your appetite before a meal by going for a short walk.
- See the 'high energy high protein foods' and 'high energy high protein drinks' fact sheets for ideas.

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# Make eating enjoyable

- Eat meals with other people if you can.
- Allow family and friends to help with shopping and cooking.
- Listen to music at meal times.
- Choose your favourite foods.
- Have snacks nearby that you enjoy.
- Have a meal at a café or a favourite restaurant.