

Taste and smell changes

Some illnesses, treatments and medicines can change your sense of taste or smell. While foods may taste different or have no taste, it is still important to eat.

Here are some tips to help if you have changes to your senses of taste and smell.

Handy tips

- Clean your mouth before and after each meal.
- Try using plastic or wooden cutlery instead of metal.
- If drinks taste unpleasant, drink through a straw.
- Try new foods or foods you normally don't like. You may find new flavours you enjoy because your tastes have changed.
- Eat when you are hungry.
- Smaller more frequent meals and snacks might be easier to eat than three large meals.
- If the smell of food bothers you, try cold or room temperature foods.
- Have a range of quick and easy meal ideas in the cupboard for days when you don't feel like cooking. When you do cook, make extra and freeze into smaller portions.

If food tastes bland

- Increase seasoning in meals. Try adding extra salt, herbs, spices, chilli, stock, lemon or honey.
- Increase the fat content of your meals to add extra flavour. You could try adding grated cheese, cream or olive oil.
- Use marinades to flavour meats and vegetables.

If foods taste bitter or metallic

- If red meat tastes strange try swapping it for other protein foods. Try chicken, fish, eggs, dairy foods or legumes like baked beans.
- Try sweeter foods like sweet potato, pumpkin, fruit yogurt or moist fruit such as berries or melon.
- Sucking on boiled sweet lollies such as ginger flavoured lollies may be helpful.

If foods taste too salty

- Avoid adding salt in cooking.
- Avoid processed meats like ham and salami in sandwiches- try using roast meat instead.
- Try mozzarella, cream cheese or ricotta instead of tasty cheese or cheese slices.
- Try adding extra sugar or honey to foods or drinks.

If foods taste too sweet

- Try adding a little salt or dilute the food.
- Add another flavour such as instant coffee or cocoa.
- Try plain cereal such as porridge or bran flakes instead of cereals with dried fruit or honey.

If foods taste like cardboard or sand

- Sip fluids with your meals.
- Use extra gravy and sauces to add moisture to meals.
- Try chewing gum. It may increase your saliva production.
- Try eating soft foods such as fish, yogurt, scrambled eggs.
- Use oral moisturisers or mouth sprays.