



## ***PATIENT INFORMATION***

### **Taste Changes**

Sometimes due to illness or treatment, your taste sensation can change. Foods may now taste different. They may taste bland, metallic or bitter.

Below are some ideas to help you if you are experiencing taste changes:

- Try to keep your mouth clean and fresh, especially before and after your meals. Clean your teeth with fluoride tooth paste and a soft toothbrush at least twice a day or after every meal.
- If you have dentures, clean them after every meal and soak them overnight in a suitable denture cleansing solution.
- Clean your tongue to prevent it becoming 'coated'. Dissolve 1 teaspoonful of bicarbonate of soda in a pint of warm water and use with a small soft or baby toothbrush. Avoid adult or large, hard-bristled toothbrushes and tongue-cleaners. This will help prevent food tasting unpleasant and will make eating more enjoyable.
- If your mouth is dry then your taste could be affected by the lack of saliva, so talk to your doctor or nurse about alternatives to help keep your mouth moist.
- Concentrate on cooking and preparing foods and drinks that you enjoy and that look and smell good and ignore those that have lost their appeal, trying them again after a few weeks.
- Experiment with different flavours, textures and temperatures – you may find cold foods are more palatable.
- Try marinating meats with readymade marinades, in fruit juice, vinegar, herbs or seasoning.

- Ready-made sauces, pickles, chutney, BBQ sauce, mayonnaise or salad dressings can also help to improve the flavour.
- Adding herbs or spices to cooking may improve taste. However, be cautious if you have a sore mouth these spices can aggravate and discomfort. The combinations below give some ideas to try:
  - Red meat works well with many flavours and cooking methods – try roasting meat with strong herbs like rosemary, thyme and mint. For dishes that use minced or diced meat, spices and roots like garlic, ginger or even cinnamon and nutmeg work well. Condiments including horseradish and mustard are also great accompaniments
  - Poultry is very adaptable and can be complemented by garlic, tarragon, basil, lemon juice or chilli,
  - Fish varies a lot in flavour and can be cooked in a many ways. Smoked fish tends to be very flavourful naturally, while other fish take on flavours well. Try steaming fish with dill and peppercorns, or baking it with lime and parsley. It could also be added to a stir fry with sesame oil and coriander.
  - Vegetarian alternatives such as tofu and vegetable-based dishes take on flavours very well. Using vegetables with a strong flavour such as celery, onions and tomatoes is helpful. Experiment with different herbs, spices and flavourings to find what you like and what works well for you.
- If you are unable to tolerate red meats, try to include other protein sources such as chicken, turkey mince, fish, beans, lentils, pulses, eggs, dairy products and/or vegetarian alternatives like Quorn®, or tofu.
- Tart/sharp foods and drinks, such as oranges, grapefruit, boiled sweets, mints and ice cold, fizzy drinks may refresh your mouth leaving a pleasant taste.
- If foods have a metallic taste, try plastic cutlery instead of metal as some people find this helps.
- If you have an aversion to tea or coffee, try peppermint or fruit teas instead or try hot chocolate or malted milk drinks like Horlicks®, or Ovaltine®,
- Suck sugar free mints/boiled sweets.
- Take cold drinks regularly whilst eating if the food tastes abnormal.

- If your mouth is coated or dry, you could try eating a small portion of fresh or tinned pineapple chunks before attempting a meal. Avoid pineapple if your mouth is sore.
- If foods taste too sweet, you can try avoiding sugary foods, or you may prefer to eat foods that are supposed to taste sweet such as desserts.

Information given to: \_\_\_\_\_

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