Fostering Good Nutrition During Treatment

Appetite disturbance is a common occurrence during the treatment of pediatric cancer. This symptom can be very distressing for both children and parents and may impact tolerance of treatment. Nutritionist-approved tips and strategies can be helpful for addressing appetite concerns.

Possible Causes of Appetite Disturbance and Suggested Management Strategies:

- **Nausea/Vomiting**
  - Try bland, cool, salty, or non-fragrant foods
  - Encourage sips for clear fluids
  - Avoid dairy and rich/heavy foods
- **Diarrhea**
  - Try binding foods: ripe banana, cooked rice, white bread, potatoes
  - Avoid fiber-rich vegetables, strong spices, greasy/fatty foods
  - Encourage fluids
- **Constipation**
  - Try adding more fiber-rich vegetables and whole grains
  - Choose natural stool softeners: prune juice, apricots
  - Avoid binding foods
  - Encourage fluids and engage in daily movement
- **Mouth Sores, Sore Throat, Painful Swallowing**
  - Try bland, cool, soft foods
  - Choose nutrient dense liquids
  - Try using a straw
  - Avoid hot, spicy, crunchy, sharp, tart, or acidic foods
- **Taste Changes**
  - Try plastic utensils instead of metal
  - Try an oral rinse, peppermints, or ginger mints before meals
  - Add lemon, lime, or cucumber slices to water
  - Try new herbs, spices, mustards, dressings, or flavored hummus
- **Early Fullness or Lack of Interest**
  - Offer small, frequent “mini” meals or snacks
  - Involve your child in food shopping and preparation
  - Offer 2-3 choices to support independence
  - Try not to force food
  - Speak with your doctors about san appetite stimulants