

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, crunch, 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 any appetite stimulants