

# HELPFUL TIPS TO IMPROVE YOUR TASTE FOR FOOD

Medication or medical treatment may impact your sense of taste. These changes are often temporary and typically improve with time. There are different things you can try to help make foods taste better.



## IF FOOD LACKS FLAVOR

- Try different sauces, marinades, seasonings, and other ingredients. These can help perk up the taste and smell of food.
- While cooking, add:
  - Barbeque sauce
  - Salad dressing
  - Spices & herbs
  - Ketchup
  - Soy sauce
  - Teriyaki sauce
  - Mustard
  - Hot sauce
  - Meat marinade
  - Wine
  - Bacon bits
  - Nuts/seeds
  - Peppers
  - Onion
- If your diet allows, add extra sugar or syrups to foods. For example, on cereal add brown sugar, maple syrup, cinnamon, nuts, dates, or raisins instead of white sugar
- Use extra salt if your diet allows. Salty foods, like cured meats, cheese spreads, and snack chips may have more taste.
- If you don't have mouth sores, try tart/citrus foods, such as oranges, lemonade, lemon pudding, sherbet or pickled foods.

## IF MEAT DOESN'T TASTE RIGHT

- Serve substitutes for red meat such as:
  - Cheese
  - Cottage cheese
  - Custard
  - Egg dishes
  - Macaroni & cheese
  - Milkshakes
  - Dried Bean/Pea Soup
- Try meat prepared in combination with other foods such as chili, lasagna, spaghetti sauce, goulash, and soups.
- Sauces, ketchups, marinades, and other seasonings may enhance the flavor of meats. Try marinating meat, chicken, or fish in soy sauce, sweet fruit juice, wine, or Italian dressing.
- High protein foods may taste better cold or at room temperature, such as:
  - Cheese or cottage cheese plate
  - Macaroni salads with shrimp or cheese
  - Tuna, egg, or chicken salad



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## F.A.S.S. TIP SHEET

FASS stands for Fat, Acid, Salt, and Sweet. This is a method that uses simple, healthy ingredients to balance out flavor in dishes and make them taste their best. Be sure to discuss with the doctor or dietitian about any dietary restrictions or requirements you may have.

### FAT

Fat coats the tongue and allows flavors to spread around the tongue and mouth. Fats also add flavor to a dish and give you a satisfying feeling.

*What works well:* cold-pressed extra virgin olive oil, naturally occurring unhydrogenated oils such as canola, coconut, safflower, sunflower, canola oil.

### ACID

Acid, especially citric acid, counterbalances the sweet flavor in a dish.

*What works well:* fresh lemon and lime, many types of vinegar, red wine and balsamic vinegar

### SALT

Salt “unlocks” the flavor in most foods that it comes into contact with.

*What works well:* sea salt (has more flavor than table salt)

### SWEET

Adding a sweet ingredient can cut out the acidic or bitter taste in a food.

*What works well:* maple syrup has a more complex and satisfying flavor when compared to refined sugar and you need much less of it. Honey also works well.

## GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

- Foods that look and smell appealing will taste better
- Select and prepare foods that look and smell appetizing to you
- Mix up the color, temperature, and textures of foods often
- Set an attractive table
- Drink liquids often or use gum, mints, lemon drops, or sour balls to remove bad tastes in your mouth
- Try adding lemon, lime, or vinegar to avoid “cardboard” tastes
- Use plastic utensils and paper plates to avoid metallic tastes
- Cook with glass kitchen-ware, avoiding metal pans, metal baking dishes, and canned foods
- Combine olive oil and sea salt and add to foods
- See your dentist regularly to make sure you don’t have any dental problems

## IF FOOD TASTES TOO SALTY

- Adding some sugar, honey, or maple syrup to your foods may tone down the saltiness of the food
- Try blander, milder foods. Skip the seasonings and marinades.



Contact your Deaconess Cancer Services Dietitian with questions at (812) 492-5064