

19. Changes in taste

Some treatments given for cancer can affect a person's sense of taste. Food may taste more salty, bitter or metallic, or the texture may seem different but this usually goes back to normal a few weeks after treatment is stopped, though it can sometimes take a few months to fully resolve. Sometimes the change in the way foods taste may be directly related to the cancer. Some people may find it hard to enjoy their food whilst their taste is altered and their appetite may diminish.

How can I manage the change in taste?

- Avoid the foods that taste strange but it may be wise to try them again every few weeks to see if their taste has gone back to normal
- If all food tastes the same, try to incorporate strong flavours and sauces into your meals, such as curry and sweet and sour sauce, though avoid strongly spiced food if your mouth is sore.
- Season your food with fresh herbs and spices for increased flavour.
- Use pickles and chutneys with cold meats and cheeses for extra flavour
- Try lemon or green tea if your usual tea and coffee tastes strange
- Sharp tasting fizzy drinks such as lemonade can sometimes feel refreshing
- Some people say they find it easier to taste hot foods (as long as it is not too hot) rather than cold foods

If the taste changes are affecting your appetite then the section on “eating & appetite” elsewhere in this directory will be useful

Living With and Beyond Cancer Information Sheet

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- Resources/Information

Local Resources:

Other Resources:	GP, oncology doctor, Clinical Nurse Specialist, district Nurse or dietician

National Resources:

Macmillan Cancer Support Line www.macmillan.org.uk Call 0808 808 00 00 — 7 days a week 8.00am—8.00pm	Calls are free of charge from all consumer landlines and mobile phones plus all mobile networks. Please note that calls to this number are not free when made from outside the UK. If you are calling from outside of the UK call on +44 207 091 2230
Macmillan on-line Community	Online support— to share experiences or vent your emotions find others who understand—join today!
Marie Curie Support Line — Living with a terminal illness and looking for support www.mariecurie.org.uk/help/support/marie-curie-support	Calls are free of charge from all consumer landlines and mobile phones plus all mobile networks. The Support Line is open 8am – 6pm Monday to Friday and 11am – 5pm Saturday

Other Resources :

Macmillan Booklets:	Cancer and complementary therapies MAC11645 Complementary & Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC) Correct Tel: 020 3668 0406
	Recipes for people affected by cancer MAC15201_E06_N
	Managing the symptoms of cancer MAC11671
	Eating Problems and Cancer MAC13613_E03_N
	Understanding chemotherapy MAC11619_E15
	Understanding radiotherapy MAC11640_E12_N