



## How to Nourish Yourself When You Don't Have an Appetite

There are many reasons for appetite changes as we age, including chronic illness, changes in metabolism, hormones, or the digestive system, decreased energy needs and changes in the senses of sight, smell and taste. Additionally, the signals from our brains that tell us when we are hungry or thirsty are not as sharp as we get older. Any of these reasons could contribute to malnutrition, a condition which increases the risk of hospitalizations and death. Continue reading for ways to maintain your nutritional status even when you don't have an appetite.

### Reasons Why Appetites Change With Age

Changes to taste, smell and vision

Chronic illness

Medications

Changes to the digestive system

Cognitive decline

Environmental or situational changes

Hormonal changes

Cancer/cancer treatment

Mouth problems

Dehydration

Physical limitations

Depression



### *Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities*

## Easy Ways to Sneak in Extra Nutrition

Eat what you like! Focusing less on the nutritional value of food and more on enjoying what you eat can help make sure you get the nutrients you need

Instead of 3 large meals, try smaller meals more often. There is no rule that says you must eat 3 meals per day. If it is more comfortable to eat smaller meals (or snacks) every 2-3 hours, do it!



Drink your calories: sometimes liquids are easier to stomach, so choosing foods like smoothies, juices, soups, even popsicles can contribute much needed calories. You can even add extra protein by mixing in protein powders, like Beneprotein. In addition, there are supplemental drinks like Ensure and Boost that you can drink alone or add to smoothies.



Add calories to your meals and snacks: using sauces (like gravy), sour cream and butter will pack more nutrition in. Try adding peanut butter to oatmeal or top your eggs with cheese.

Keep it simple: use finger foods like cut up cheese and crackers, fruit or small sandwiches





Move your body: as little as 5 minutes a day can help to increase your appetite



Spice up your food: add extra spices, vinegars and seasonings to increase palatability

## 6 Ways to Stimulate Appetite

When possible, eat with others: companionship (or community dining) has been shown to improve intake



Stay hydrated to help maintain normal hunger cues

Keep on top of medical conditions: changes to health status or medications can impact appetite



Consider texture: if there are dental issues, softer foods like yogurt, cottage cheese, oatmeal and soups may be easier to tolerate





# Satisfying Snack Ideas

Cottage cheese and fruit



Cereal with milk or mixed into yogurt

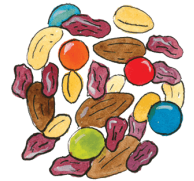


Yogurt parfait with granola and fruit

Cheese and crackers

Peanut butter (or any nut butter) on toast

Mixed nuts or trail mix



HUMMUS

Hummus with veggies, pretzels, pita or crackers



Egg, tuna or chicken salad sandwich

**Resources:** <https://longtermcarerd.com/elderly-weight-loss/>

<https://longtermcarerd.com/foods-for-elderly-with-no-appetite/>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4589891/>

**Consumer-centered access for long-term care information, referrals and assessments.**

**For information, call 518-382-8481, #9, ext. 304**



**NY Connects**  
Your Link to Long Term Services and Supports

**Do you have questions or concerns about what to eat?**

If you are participating in services offered by Schenectady County's Senior and Long Term Care services, you are eligible for a free consultation with Debbie Griswold, Registered Dietitian.

Call Cornell Cooperative Extension, Schenectady County at 518-372-1622, ext. 269 to contact or leave a message.

**Check out our website for nutrition resources: <http://ccschenectady.org/nutrition-for-seniors>**

Schenectady County Department of Senior and Long Term Care Services denies no person services or access to service based upon race, color, sex, religion, national origin, marital status and/or handicapping conditions. Schenectady County Department of Senior and Long Term Care Services is primarily funded with County tax dollars. Supplemental funding is through the New York State Office for the Aging under Title III-B/D, III-C-1, III-C-2, III-F of the Federal Older Americans Act, and New York State Expanded In-Home Services for the Elderly (EISEP), Community Services for the Elderly Act (CSE), Congregate Services Initiative (CSI), and the Wellness In Nutrition (WIN).

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