

GMHC'S Nutrition & Wellness Program

TASTE CHANGES

Taste changes can impair the enjoyment of food and limit the types and amounts of food eaten. This can result in inadequate calorie and protein intake and can cause vitamin and mineral deficiencies. Therefore, it is important to manage taste changes when they arise.

CAUSES OF TASTE CHANGES

- Medications
- Mouth or Throat Infections
- Aging

COMMON TASTE CHANGES

- A **bitter or metallic taste**, especially foods from the meat or dairy food groups.
- A **numbness** in the mouth that can block some tastes.
- **Difficulty tasting sweet foods.**
- Bitter foods taste **unusually strong**.

TIPS FOR DEALING WITH TASTE CHANGES

- **Rinse with ½ teaspoon baking soda** in one cup of warm water before meals.
- **During meals, drink liquids.** Sherbet or sorbet may also help cleanse your palate.
- **Eat a sprig of parsley after meals.** Parsley is a natural deodorizer.
- **Rinse your mouth with lemon** added to water. This may reduce metallic tastes.
- Try eating with **plastic** utensils.

- Consume **small, frequent, meals**.
- **Talk to your dentist** about special mouthwashes, good mouth care, and to rule out any dental problems that may be causing bad taste.
- Eat in a **relaxed** manner.
- Enhance **food presentation**.

COOKING TIPS TO HELP IMPROVE THE TASTE OF FOODS

- Try **marinating** meats, fish, and poultry in sweet, sour, or spicy liquids such as barbecue sauce, soy sauce, lemon & garlic, fruit juices, or Italian dressing.
- Try **flavoring meats with herbs**. Some herb suggestions for beef include: oregano, garlic, parsley, or rosemary. For chicken: garlic, basil, tarragon, sage, or curry. For fish: garlic, ginger, dill, lemon, or soy sauce.
- Try **substituting eggs, beans, nuts/nut butter, soy products, fish, or chicken** for meats if they are unpalatable to help meet your protein needs.
- Try **incorporating meats into mixed dishes** like chilies, stir-fries, soups, and casseroles.
- Try **adding onion, fresh herbs, garlic, spices, toasted nuts, and/or olive oil** to flavor your vegetables.
- Try **cooking with sweeteners** or adding them to food. Use honey, brown sugar,

molasses, or fruit juices on meats and/or vegetables to add flavor.

- Try **salting your food and/or using condiments** such as mustard, relish, vinegar, lemon juice, salsa, tahini, pickles, or olives. Be aware that salt may need to be restricted for those who suffer from high blood pressure.
- Try serving foods at **room temperature**. This can help maximize flavor. If flavors are too strong, try serving foods at a **cold temperature**.

Revised 12/09 I:\nutrition\research\taste

