

Getting Someone to Eat

By Gloria Vaughn

Whether you're caring for someone with cancer, advanced Alzheimer's, or some other illness, it can be very disheartening to see the person you care for not eat. These folks are involuntarily losing weight and wasting away from the lack of vitamins and nutrients. It may be due to cancer treatments, medications, a tumor, depression, or simply not feeling well. Caregiver.com suggests the following ways to help your loved one eat. Of course you also need to be consulting with your doctor as well.

- Water. Water. Water. Make sure the person you are caring for has plenty of water to avoid dehydration which can lead to appetite suppression.
- Keep it small. Instead of 3 large meals, which can look overwhelming to someone in poor health, serve 6 small meals a day.
- Bulk up on the amount of calories per meal. For instance you can add protein powder mix to shakes or drinks to increase calories.
- Soft is better. Serve soft foods such as pudding, ice cream, or fruit smoothies because they can be tasty and easy to digest.
- Make it tasty. Don't serve bland or sour tasting foods.
- Put the power in their hands. When possible give the person you are caring for the decision-making power to decide what they would like to eat. It helps them to feel in control.
- Make it pretty. Garnish the plate with a strawberry or melon. Make the dining experience pleasant by playing soft music or talking to them about the day's events while they are eating to take their minds off not feeling well.
- Write it down. Keep a food diary and share it with your doctor or dietician. They may be experiencing digestive problems or irritable bowel syndrome.
- Work it out. Try and get them moving to work up an appetite. If overall exercise such as walking isn't possible, have them fold laundry or peel vegetables.