



Wellness Center

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LOW APPETITE/NAUSEA

Nausea and low appetite can make eating difficult. Low appetite and nausea can be caused by many factors such as stress, depression, medications, illness/infection, digestive issues, food intolerances, or hormone imbalances. It is important for students to maintain adequate food and fluid intakes as much as possible, even when experiencing nausea or decreased appetite. This will help prevent fatigue, unintentional weight loss, and/or muscle wasting, and electrolyte imbalances.

Treatment:

- Eat small, frequent meals. Try eating small snacks throughout the day instead of having less frequent, larger meals. Keep mealtimes consistent as much as possible daily.
- Eat food cold or at room temperature. This helps to reduce the smell and taste of foods.
- Ask someone to cook for you and leave the room or house while they cook. Alternatively, order takeout. Stay out of the kitchen when feeling nauseated to avoid strong smells.
- Do not eat in a warm room. This will prevent feelings of being stuffy and/or stale.
- Rinse your mouth before and after meals to get rid of any bad tastes in the mouth. Try to avoid brushing your teeth until after your first meal/snack of the day.
- Sit up or lie back with your head raised for a least an hour after eating if you need to rest.
- Do not force yourself to eat if you are vomiting. Try drinking small sips of water or other clear liquids, such as a watered-down sports drink or ginger ale. Once your stomach settles down, try sipping on something electrolyte rich (such as broth or sports drink). Find foods that you enjoy eating, this may change day to day!

Foods to eat when nauseated/experiencing low appetite:

- Try dry foods such as crackers, toast, dry cereal, bread sticks, pretzels.
- Try bland, soft, easy-to-digest foods: eggs, unseasoned chicken breast, plain noodles, rice, baked/boiled/mashed potatoes, low-fat pudding, and fruits such as bananas, watermelon, or oranges.
- Try poultry or soy instead of red meat. Having a sudden aversion to red meat is common. Get protein from alternative sources.
- Drink plenty of fluids: water, flat ginger ale, chicken or vegetable broth, sports drinks, small bites of gelatin.
- Try drinking calories in the form of a smoothie. For a simple recipe, blend 1 banana, 1/3 cup Greek yogurt, 1/4 cup water or milk, 1 handful strawberries, 2 tablespoons nut butter.
- Avoid foods that are very sweet, greasy, or fried. Try avoiding foods with a strong smell (like fish).

When to seek medical treatment:

- If you are drinking only clear liquids for more than 2 days in a row, please seek medical treatment, as these are not providing enough nutrients.
- If you experience complete loss of appetite, vomiting, inability to keep liquids down, pain when trying to eat, or irregular urination for one or more days please seek medication help.

If symptoms worsen, please return to the Wellness Center for re-evaluation. To book an appointment call Dial-A-Nurse at (773) 508-8883 or go online to <https://www.luc.edu/wellness/>.

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