

Appetite Changes

WHY HAS MY LOVED ONE'S APPETITE CHANGED?

Many seniors tend to eat less as their metabolism slows and nutritional needs change, but what if your loved one hardly eats at all? Families are often faced with this challenge at some point in time. Eating is a social event; giving food and drink is a way of showing you care. When your loved one is eating less, refusing to eat or cannot eat, it can be very hard to accept.

Although it is normal for appetite to change with age, there are a number of factors that can also cause a loss of appetite in seniors:

- Deteriorating health
- Medication side effects
- Eating can become hard work
- Lack of energy
- Changing taste buds and smell



OUR MISSION:

Park Place Seniors Living strives to provide enriched life experiences to seniors through innovation and creativity.

OUR VISION:

At Park Place Seniors Living we are known for our unwavering commitment to enriching the lives of those we serve by providing a voice and a choice with dignity, respect and empathy.

Park Place Seniors Living | 1656 West 75 Ave, Vancouver
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How Do I Know?

HOW DO I KNOW MY LOVED ONE DOES NOT WANT TO EAT OR DRINK?

Listen and watch closely to what your loved one is telling you about eating and drinking. It is important that you respect what they are telling you and or the care team members.

Here are some signs:

- 1 Saying things like, "No, I just can't" or "I'm too tired. You have it."
- 2 Calling out or moaning as you offer food or drink.
- 3 Turning their head away from the spoon or cup.
- 4 Closing their lips as you offer food.
- 5 Pushing food away.

What Are the Alternatives?

SUPPLEMENTS:

Families often wonder if having softer food textures or nutritional supplements will help to improve eating. Texture changes or supplements may have a benefit at different stages and in different ways.

TUBE FEEDING:

Some families also wonder about tube feeding, (providing nutrition through a hole in the stomach). Research shows that tube feeding may not make people more comfortable or improve their quality of life. There are complications that can occur like bloating, diarrhea, nausea or infection.

SPEAK WITH A DIETITIAN:

Families should talk openly while their loved ones can talk about their wishes. For more information speak with the Dietitian and other care team members.

What Can You Do?

You can do a lot to show your loved one that you care, spend time together that is not focused on food by enjoying activities like:

- Playing music
- Reading out loud
- Looking at pictures
- Going for a walk

Remember, rejecting food does not mean your loved one is rejecting you. The changes your loved one goes through as their health declines can be difficult. The care team will be happy to discuss these with you.

FAST FACT

The physical changes of aging that can spoil your appetite include changes to the digestive system, hormonal changes, changes to the sense of smell, taste and vision and a decreased need for energy.

Reviewed by a group of Park Place Family Representatives