

Further information

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**WE ARE
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from many sources including research with 200 people living with advanced cancer.

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LIVING WITH CHANGES IN THE TEXTURE OF FOOD

Information to help people living with cancer



University
of Southampton | School of Nursing
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Are you living with advanced cancer?

If so, you may find that the texture of food seems different when you eat.

This leaflet will tell you what others have found helpful when living with change in the feel of food in their mouth.

You can also talk to your nurse or doctor who will be able to assess the reason for the change in the texture of your food. The cause may be treatable.

Tips to help you live with texture change

You may find that you don't enjoy some foods any more because they have a different feel when they are in your mouth.

Perhaps meat and oranges seem 'stringy'. Or bread and potato feel mushy or gritty. Even some drinks may seem gluey.

When food has a strange texture it can mean that you have to force yourself to swallow. You may find that you have to spit the food out.

I find the feel of some foods makes me feel sick

Avoiding foods that have an unpleasant texture can help. Trying to eat foods that make you feel sick can put you off eating other things.

However, you might find that food that now has a strange texture can be eaten in a different form. For example, some people who are unable to eat bread find they can continue to eat toast.

Alternatively, consider getting your nourishment from different sorts of food. For example, eat rice instead of potato, or cheese and eggs instead of meat.

I find food dry

You may find that food seems to draw the saliva out of your mouth. When this happens it can be difficult to chew and swallow.

Soft, moist food is likely to be easiest to eat. Soft foods do not need a lot of chewing, for example, macaroni cheese or sponge pudding and custard. Sauce or gravy can help to make food soft and moist. You may also find taking sips of fluid with food helpful.

When people find some foods dry, they often still enjoy soups and cereals. You could consider increasing the energy and protein in soup by adding cream or cheese. Similarly, milk can be fortified with powdered milk before it is added to cereal, so that it contains more protein and energy. (See the *Eating well* leaflet for more information about fortifying foods.)

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