

Further information

www.mru.nursing.soton.ac.uk/patient.html
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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 SMELL 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? Do you find that food smells different?

This leaflet will tell you what other people have found helpful when they were dealing with changes in their sense of smell.

Tips to help you live with changes in your sense of smell

In particular, hot dishes can smell odd or even as though the food is off. Hot drinks such as tea, coffee and chocolate can have a smell that makes you feel sick. You may find that you force yourself to eat food that smells unpleasant.

It is best to avoid food that smells unpleasant, if it spoils your enjoyment of other food.

I find the smell of food cooking unpleasant

Try to avoid the smell of cooking food. If someone else is cooking for you, you could go to a room that's away from the kitchen. Keep doors shut and windows open, or ask for the person cooking to open the windows in the kitchen.

If you are cooking for yourself, use a microwave when possible, or cook food in the oven rather than on a hob. For example, oven-bake fish instead of frying.

Perhaps there is someone who can prepare meals for you. You may need to ask, as they will probably be unaware that preparing food puts you off eating.

I don't like the smell of food on my plate

The smell of hot food is carried by rising hot air and steam as the food cools. Many cold foods have little smell. You may find that you prefer to eat your meals when they are quite cool.

Alternatively, you may find cold meals more enjoyable. Cold food is as good for you as hot food.

I find other smells put me off my food

Smells such as smoke, cleaning fluids and perfumes can put you off your meals. If you find these smells troubling, try to avoid them. Others may not be aware that smells are bothering you. You may need to explain that smells can put people with cancer off their food.

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