What to Eat When Nothing Tastes Good

A quick reference for cancer patients by Dr. Suzanne McMurry, ND, FABNO, Integrative Oncologist

Read the full article at https://www.naturopathiccancertreatment.com/what-to-eat/

Key Nutrients to Focus On

Fiber – for digestion & gut health

- Berries (blueberries, strawberries, raspberries)
- Apples (green for tartness)
- Oats, chia seeds, flax seeds



Healthy Fats – for energy & satiety

- Avocado
- Nuts, nut butters
- Seeds, seed butters
- Olive oil, avocado oil, coconut oil, MCT oil




Protein – for strength & healing

- Beans and lentils
- Nut butters and seed butters
- Collagen, protein powders (pea, rice, hemp, whey)
- Yogurt (dairy or plant-based)




How to Enjoy Food Without Taste

Sight:

Use colorful foods and attractive plating.

Smell:

Add fragrant herbs and spices.

Texture:

Mix crunchy, creamy, and smooth foods.

Social/Environment:

Eat with loved ones or play music.

Quick Eating Strategies

- Try smoothies and juices when chewing feels difficult.
- Experiment with bold flavors like ginger, lemon, or cayenne (avoid citrus if you have mouth sores).
- Soups are comforting and can be easily adapted for extra calories or protein.
- Stay hydrated throughout the day.
- Brush and rinse often for better taste.
- Use a straw if smells are overwhelming.

Recipes to Try When Nothing Tastes Good

Sometimes the hardest part of eating during treatment is figuring out *what* to make. To help, here are some simple, nutrient-packed recipes you can try at home. They're easy to modify based on what tastes best to you.

Tropical Smoothie

(4 servings)

- 2 cups plain plant-based yogurt (coconut or soy)
- 1 mango, peeled and chopped
- 1 papaya, peeled, seeded, and chopped
- 2 Tbsp fresh lime juice + lime slices for garnish
- ¼ cup raw cashews
- ¼ tsp almond extract
- 1 cup ice cubes (more as desired)

Directions: Blend all ingredients. Add more ice cubes to thin if needed. Garnish with lime slices.

Per serving: 185 calories, 12g protein, 10g fat, 230mg calcium

Almond Oatmeal Breakfast Smoothie

(1 serving)

- 2 Tbsp almond butter
- ¼ cup cooked oatmeal
- ½ medium green apple
- ½ cup frozen blueberries
- Unsweetened oat milk (to desired thickness)
- (Optional) ½ banana for added sweetness
- (Optional) organic cacao powder or cacao nibs and powdered stevia to taste

Directions: Blend all ingredients until smooth.

Strawberry Oat Breakfast Smoothie

(1 serving)

- 2 Tbsp almond butter
- ¼ cup cooked oatmeal
- ½ medium green apple
- ½ cup frozen blueberries
- Unsweetened oat milk (to desired thickness)
- (Optional) ½ banana for added sweetness
- (Optional) organic cacao powder or cacao nibs and powdered stevia to taste

Directions: Blend and enjoy!

Keto Mint Smoothie

(1 serving)

- 1 cup unsweetened almond or cashew milk
- ¼ cup coconut milk
- ½ medium avocado
- 1 Tbsp cacao powder
- ½ handful mint leaves
- 1 Tbsp MCT oil
- 1 handful ice cubes
- 5 drops liquid stevia (optional)
- (Optional) ¼ cup protein or collagen powder

Directions: Blend until creamy.

Banana Nut Smoothie

(1 serving)

- ½ banana
- ½ cup frozen mixed berries
- 1 cup unsweetened almond milk
- 1 Tbsp peanut butter
- 1 Tbsp chia seeds
- 1 Tbsp ground oats
- 1 handful walnut pieces
- 1 handful raw cashews
- Dash of cinnamon
- 4 ice cubes

Directions: Blend and enjoy!

Ginger Soy Mushroom Soup

(Makes ~5 ¾ cups)

- 2 Tbsp sesame oil
- 1 Tbsp fresh ginger, grated
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 2 cups mushrooms, sliced
- 4 cups low-salt vegetable broth
- 1 medium carrot, peeled and thinly sliced
- 2 Tbsp soy sauce
- 1 cup snow peas
- 1 package (350 g) firm or extra-firm tofu, cubed
- 1 green onion, thinly sliced

Directions:

1. In a large pot, cook ginger, garlic, and mushrooms in sesame oil over medium heat until soft (about 5 minutes).
2. Add broth and carrots. Bring to a boil.
3. Reduce heat and simmer uncovered for 15 minutes.
4. Stir in soy sauce, snow peas, and tofu. Cook until peas are bright green and tofu is warmed through (about 2 minutes).
5. Stir in green onion and serve.

Tips:

- For mouth sores: skip the ginger.
- For more calories: add extra sesame oil.
- For more protein: whisk 4 eggs in a small bowl and slowly stir them into the simmering soup at the end of cooking until cooked through.

These recipes are just a starting point.

The beauty is that you can adapt them—add a little extra oil for calories, swap fruits for variety, or change textures depending on what feels best to you.