



## FEATURE ARTICLE FROM **Always Best Care**

# Dealing with Loss of Appetite in an Aging Parent

It is not uncommon for seniors' appetites to dwindle. This isn't usually a cause for concern as long as they are able to maintain a healthy weight and are receiving all of their daily nutrients. When loss of appetite starts affecting their health, however, it can be worrisome. A poor diet can weaken the immune system, lower energy, contribute to vitamin deficiencies, and more. There can be many causes for reduced appetite. Check out the potential side effects of medications that your loved one is on, as this can play a role. Talk to their doctor about any concerns you may have. Poor-fitting dentures can also be a culprit. If their dentures are shifting around, it can make it difficult or painful to eat.

### Stimulating Your Loved One's Appetite

There are several ways that you can support your aging parent in boosting their appetite and ensuring that they're eating well each day. Try a few different approaches and see what works best.

- **Make their favorite foods.** Seniors may be more apt to eat if some of their meals are things they really enjoy. Freezing individual portion sizes can be a great way to have healthy foods on hand and [make preparation easier](#) without letting extras go to waste.
- **Focus on nutrient dense foods.** Your elderly parent may not be eating a lot, but you can make sure that they're getting the most benefit out of what they do eat. Skip the processed foods and focus on fresh fruits and vegetables, [lean protein](#), and whole grains. Try to incorporate foods such as avocado, salmon, peanut butter, low-fat dairy, or unsalted nuts into meals and snacks.
- **Stick to a schedule.** Try to get your loved one on a routine with meals and snacks. This will help their body adjust to eating at regular intervals and hopefully stimulate appetite or at least remind them to try to eat.
- **Encourage healthy grazing.** If your senior isn't eating much during meals, have healthy snacks on hand so that they can graze throughout the day. Fruit smoothies or nutritional supplement drinks can also help to boost calories and nutrient intake. When they are hungry, encourage a well-balanced meal.
- **Offer companionship.** Depression and loneliness can take a negative toll on appetite. If your aging parent lives alone, try to arrange company for meal times. Perhaps they can share a meal with a friend, go to the local senior center, or visit a neighbor. Another option is an in-home caregiver who can not only provide companionship but also help with meal planning, preparation, and cleanup. They can also remind your loved one to

eat and make sure food is available and has not expired.

Tackling loss of appetite can be challenging, but with a little patience and trying different approaches, you can find what works best for your loved one and their health. Partnering with family, friends, their physician, and an in-home caregiver means having more people looking out for your aging parent's well-being. Learn more about how [Always Best Care](#) can support your senior at meal times and throughout the day with a wide variety of activities by calling (855) 470-2273 to schedule a free consultation.