

Smell, Taste, and Nutrition Issues after COVID-19

Smell Retraining

Altered smell and loss of smell is common after COVID-19. Smell retraining may assist with recovery. For smell retraining there are 4 essential oils that are used to assist in possibly restoring sense of smell. The essential oils are: rose, citronel (citrus or lemon), eucalyptus (menthol), and cinnamon. In order to perform smell retraining, you should smell each essential oil twice a day for 6 weeks. Steps are as follows:

1. Place a few drops of the essential oil on a cotton ball or pad and let it sit for a minute or two.
2. Bring the pad within an inch of your nose and inhale through your nose slowly and naturally. Visualize what you're trying to smell, either by looking at a picture or imagining with your eyes closed.
3. Move the pad away, and then repeat several times with the same oil.
4. Repeat this process with each essential oil taking a few minute break between each separate oil.

Try not to get discouraged. You may not smell anything at first, but that is ok. It may take time before you begin to smell anything.

Loss of Taste

Losing your sense of taste can make eating difficult, but there are other ways you can enjoy your food besides taste. Below outlines ways to focus on foods to help you enjoy eating.

Texture is a very important and often overlooked part of food experience. For example, if your meal is mac and cheese, cooked (soft or mushy) vegetable, and a meat, there is no interesting texture difference. More appetizing texture contrasts could include adding a crunchy salad with nuts/seeds instead the of cooked vegetables. How can you incorporate texture differences in your meal?

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Using different temperatures is another way to make your meal/snack more interesting. For example, try a nice cold cucumber salad with a hot grilled cheese sandwich. It can also be helpful to improve the visual appeal of your meal by choosing a more colorful plate and foods. Using these other senses like touch and sight can make it easier to eat despite your altered taste.

Using spices can also help to improve your eating experience. Have you ever tasted something spicy hot before? Think about how your body reacted to this. Spicy foods can sometimes be a perfect thing to make your meals more interesting.

Healthy Nutrition for Healing

Nutritional guidance will be based on your own personal needs. It can be helpful to work with a nutritionist to determine areas to focus on. In general, a healthy diet includes vegetables, fruits, whole grains, healthy fats, lean protein and dairy. Drink plenty of water and limit alcohol.

Managing Nausea and Vomiting

1. Avoid cooking or preparing foods with strong odors, if possible have someone else cook. Foods that are cold or room temperature are usually easier to eat.
2. Eat small snacks every two hours: crackers, applesauce, pretzels are usually good options.
3. Try to create a relaxing atmosphere. Examples can include playing music, doing a puzzle, or performing another activity you enjoy. This can take your mind off of the nausea.