



Happy New Year!

Wishing you moments of rest, strength, and joy in the year ahead. Thank you for the love, patience, and courage you bring to each day. May this new year bring you support when you need it, peace when you seek it, and gratitude from all whose lives you touch. You are truly appreciated.

WHY LOSS OF APPETITE IN SENIORS IS A SERIOUS CONCERN FOR FAMILY CAREGIVERS

If you're caring for an aging parent or loved one, noticing a drop in their appetite can be unsettling—and for good reason. Loss of appetite is not a normal part of aging. It can signal underlying health issues and may lead to serious problems like malnutrition, weakness, and increased fall risk.

When seniors don't eat enough, they may lose muscle, energy, and weight more quickly than younger adults. This can reduce independence, make daily tasks harder, and increase the chance of illness and hospital visits. Often, appetite loss stems from treatable issues such as medication side effects, depression, dental pain, or difficulty swallowing. Because these problems aren't always obvious, changes in eating habits can be an early warning sign caregivers should not ignore.

The good news: You can play a key role in spotting appetite changes early and helping your loved one stay healthy and strong. Here's a simple checklist to guide you.

Caregiver Checklist:

Supporting a Senior With Low Appetite

1. Observe Eating Habits

- Is your loved one leaving more food on the plate than usual?
- Are mealtimes becoming shorter or less frequent?
- Has their weight, energy level, or mood changed?

Continued



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2. Create a Comfortable Mealtime Environment

- Serve smaller, nutrient-dense meals throughout the day rather than three large ones.
- Reduce distractions and make mealtimes relaxed and social when possible.
- Offer favorite foods with appealing colors, smells, and textures.

3. Address Potential Barriers

- Check for dental pain, mouth sores, or difficulty chewing.
- Notice signs of trouble swallowing (coughing, choking, avoiding certain textures).
- Make sure eyeglasses or hearing aids are working—sensory issues can affect appetite.

4. Review Medications

- Ask a healthcare provider or pharmacist whether any medications may reduce appetite or cause nausea.
- Never stop or change medications without medical guidance.

5. Support Hydration

- Encourage sips of water throughout the day.
- Offer hydrating foods like soups, fruit, yogurt, or smoothies.

6. Promote Light Activity

- Gentle daily movement can stimulate appetite and support overall well-being.

7. Seek Professional Help Early

- Contact a healthcare provider if appetite declines for more than a few days, weight drops unexpectedly, or signs of dehydration or weakness appear.
- A doctor, dietitian, or speech-language pathologist can help identify treatable causes and safe strategies.



Support Groups

- 1st Monday of the month at 4pm, First Presbyterian Church, 314 Xenia Ave, Yellow Springs
- 1st Wednesday of the month at 11:30 am, GCCOA Xenia office
- 2nd & 4th Tuesdays at 9:30 am, Peace Lutheran Church, 3530 Dayton• Xenia Rd, Beavercreek

Weekly Radio Segment: Partners in Caregiving every Thursday soon after 6pm, WBZI—FM 100.3 AM 1500
Also available online: gcco.org/radio