



**HIV/AIDS QUALITY OF
CARE INITIATIVE
(HAQOCI)**



Clinical Epidemiology Resource & Training Centre
(CERTC)
College of Health Sciences
University of Zimbabwe
(In Conjunction with the Ministry of
Health & Child Welfare)

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Supported by U.S. Centers for Disease Control and
Prevention (CDC)- Zimbabwe AIDS Program



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What To Do When Your Appetite is Poor

Opportunistic Infection Prevention Clinic
Clinical Epidemiology Resource & Training Centre
(CERTC)
College of Health Sciences
University of Zimbabwe

Brochure Series QOC 12

What To Do When Your Appetite is Poor

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Brochure Series QOC

HIV/AIDS can sometimes make it difficult to eat. Some foods, which were eaten without a problem before, may now be difficult to eat or digest. Infections in the mouth cause sores, which hurt when eating, or tiredness may prevent eating. Anxiety and worry about food and nutrition can also be a problem even when feeling well.

Monotonous meals, noxious smells and odours can contribute a great deal to loss of appetite. There are certain things, which help people living with HIV/AIDS to eat and feel better when they have these problems.

- Try not to eat alone. Meals can be more enjoyable when shared with good company.
- Make meals interesting. Eat outside for a change, have a picnic or play your favourite music. When eating is a pleasant experience you are likely to eat well.
- Make food appealing. Add garnishes, serve the food in nice dishes or bowls or set the table nicely.
- Break the rules about meal times and eat whenever you feel like eating.

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- Eat the food you like most. This way you are likely to eat more.
- Break tradition and have your favourite food at any time of the day (For example: breakfast food can make an ideal snack or mutakura/inkobe can be great for breakfast). This way you are likely to eat more.
- Try eating several smaller meals more often throughout the day. With a poor appetite, a large plate of food can be very off-putting.
- Avoid alcohol. Alcohol will dull your appetite and rob your body of important nutrients.
- Exercise improves appetite. Even light exercise is fine. Try to take daily walks before meals.
- Drink more high-energy drinks such as milk, yoghurt and mahewu/ amahewu.
- Practice good oral hygiene.
- Discuss your appetite with your health workers. Medicines that can stimulate your appetite can be prescribed.

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