

# Medical Oncology

## Taste Changes Information Sheet

### Tips for Coping with Taste Changes

- Try using plastic flatware, glass cups and plates if you have a bitter or metallic taste while eating.
- Try sugar-free lemon drops, gum, or mints.
- Avoid canned foods; choose fresh or frozen instead.
- If you do not have a sore mouth or throat, try seasoning foods with tart flavors like lemon wedges, vinegars, citrus fruits, or pickled foods.
- Experiment with new seasoning such as onion, garlic, chili powder, basil, oregano, rosemary, tarragon, barbeque sauce, mustard, ketchup, or mint.
- Have a variety of foods available. It is common for foods to taste different from day to day, sometimes even hour to hour.
- Remember the FASS principle.
  - **F**at: acts as a vehicle to move flavors around your mouth. Add fat to food to enhance the flavor.
  - **A**cid: add acidic ingredients if things taste sweet.
  - **S**alt: add salt if things taste sweet.
  - **S**weet: add sweeteners if things taste bitter or salty.
- Keep your mouth clean.
- Try foods at different temperatures.
- Dry mouth can affect the way foods taste. Sip fluids often throughout the day.
- Try marinating meats to make them tender and to reduce the metallic taste.
- Sometimes red meat tastes strange. Do not forget that chicken, fish, eggs, dairy, nuts or nut butters and legumes are good sources of protein, too.
- Make smoothies and shakes.
- If smells are bothering you, cover beverages and drink them through a straw, choose foods that do not need to be cooked and avoid eating in rooms that are stuffy or too warm.

See the *Chemotherapy/Immunotherapy Patient Guide* book for more information.

If you have questions or concerns, please call your care team at:  
Bronson Cancer Center – Battle Creek 269-245-8660  
Bronson Cancer Center – Kalamazoo 269-286-7170