



Steps to Reduce Loneliness and Increase Appetite

Loneliness is a major risk factor. A great number of older people have lost a partner and are alone. Research shows there is a correlation between living alone and having lower quality diets. Men are at greater risk because they are often less experienced at cooking, meal planning and shopping. Women are often not motivated to prepare meals because there is no one to enjoy them. Some steps to take in order to help your loved one are:

1. Eat a meal together. Having someone else to eat with makes an amazing difference. Just the presence of someone else seems to stimulate the appetite.
2. Eating by a window, in a park or one's porch. This makes a person feel part of the environment, not alone.
3. Eating in a congregate situation greatly increases an appetite. Creating a congregate situation or encouraging your loved one to join others, is important
4. The place setting does a lot to improve appetite. Using good china or dishes instead of disposable ware is much more appealing. However, the place setting should still be kept simple
5. Make the meal look appealing. Pay attention to the use of a variety of colors. Add some "pizzazz" by using creative, colorful garnishes.
6. Use Care In Containers to provide a variety of meals.
7. Make sure the dining area is well lit, but without glare. It makes it easier to see the food and it looks more appetizing.
8. A tranquil environment provides less confusion for an older adult. They will tend to eat better in a quiet environment than a more active, chaotic environment.
9. Play music softly in the background.
10. Service six small meals a day instead of three large ones. A full plate can seem like a daunting task.
11. Carefully check the temperature of foods for safety and appetite reasons.
12. Know favorite foods and serve them more often. A balanced diet that they will eat is more important than variety.