

## Self-help series fact sheet 4

### Maintaining a healthy diet

Another symptom of Long COVID is the loss of appetite and the changes to your senses of taste and smell.

To regain good health it's important to maintain good nutrition and hydration and to continue to eat and drink regularly throughout the day.

Dietitians have recommended that you:

1. Eat and drink regularly – even if you are not hungry or thirsty. Remember this is the fuel that your body needs to heal itself.
2. Base your meals on potatoes, bread, rice, pasta or other starchy carbohydrates, as they are a good source of energy. Wholegrain types are good for fibre and often release energy more slowly: this is known as having a low glycemic index and may help when struggling with fatigue.
3. Each day, aim to have at least five portions of a variety of fruits and vegetables, for vitamins, minerals and fibre. Fresh, frozen, tinned or dried all count.
4. Beans, nuts and seeds, fish, eggs and meat are good sources of protein. Eat red meat less often and small portions only, especially processed types like sausages, burgers or bacon. Fish is low fat and good to include twice a week, especially oily types such as salmon, and sardines, which are rich in omega-3.



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5. Milk, cheese and yoghurt and some vitamins are sources of protein. They're also an important source of calcium, which keeps bones healthy. If choosing dairy-free alternatives, make sure they are fortified with calcium.
6. Seek the assistance of a professional dietician if necessary.

About a third of patients have prolonged troubles with taste and smell after an acute COVID infection. Fortunately, most of these will return to normal within a 6 to 12 month period, but while you are finding your tastes have changed these can affect your appetite and eating.

Ways to assist you with this is by maybe adding strong flavors such as spices, or sharp and bitter tastes like citrus. Some people find that varying the textures of their food keeps it interesting. Food served cold or at room temperature is often better tolerated.

During this series of fact sheets there will be a number of these tips and tricks but if you would like further information on a particular subject please feel free to contact us by emailing [info@arthritisact.org.au](mailto:info@arthritisact.org.au) and we will send you further information and a list of support activities.