

# HANDOUT 7.1. JOB AID 3: MANAGING ANOREXIA (LOSS OF APPETITE)

Ask the client if he/she can still eat food.

## If NO

- Try to determine the cause of the anorexia (depression, stress, medications, weakness and fatigue, HIV-related dementia, pain or the body's natural response to infection).
- Determine how long the client has felt this way, especially if he/she is depressed or stressed.
- Refer the client for medical management if appetite loss is severe or results from infection or depression which has persisted for a long time
- Explain to the client the importance of trying to maintain good nutrition even when not feeling well.
- Ask about the client's current eating habits. Use a list of local, affordable foods and show some foods the client can prepare and eat.
- Counsel the client to take a daily multivitamin if available.

## If YES

- Praise the client for trying to maintain food intake.
- Encourage the client to continue eating food even when not feeling well.
- Reaffirm the importance of maintaining good nutrition.
- Counsel the client on how to manage loss of appetite.

## Counsel the client on how to manage anorexia (loss of appetite).

- Eat small amounts of food more often. Try eating small meals every 2–4 hours.
- Eat your favourite foods whenever you want.
- Try to avoid eating the same food again and again.
- Avoid foods with a strong smell.
- Drink plenty of fluids, preferably between meals.
- Avoid alcohol.
- Do light exercise such as taking a walk before meals to help stimulate appetite.
- Avoid stress at mealtimes and immediately before meals.
- If possible, ask your family or friends to prepare meals for you.
- Avoid eating alone. Try to eat with family or friends.
- Go back to your regular diet, including foods from all food groups, once the anorexia stops.
- Eat a little extra food if you experience weight loss to help you gain the weight back.

## MEAL IDEAS FOR PEOPLE WITH ANOREXIA (LOSS OF APPETITE)

The goal is to eat small but nutritious meals five or six times a day.

- Mashed potatoes or beans mixed with fruit juice
- Rice, maize or millet porridge with milk and sugar or honey
- Broth made from plain boiled meat or chicken bones or fish
- Bean or pea and mushroom soup
- Pumpkin and onion soup
- Avocado
- Scrambled or boiled egg
- Roasted groundnuts mixed with simsim (sesame seeds) as a sauce for rice, sweet potatoes, *matooke*, or *posho*
- Soft fruit such as bananas or mangoes with yoghurt

### Nutrient-dense snack ideas

- Egg and milk pudding or custard
- Roasted groundnuts with simsim plus fruit juice or a cup of milk
- Porridge made with milk with honey or sugar
- Fresh fruit

### Recipe for enriched porridge

#### Ingredients

- 1 level cup flour (e.g., millet, sorghum)
- 6–8 cups clean water
- 1 cup milk or lemon or orange juice
- 2 teaspoons sugar

#### Preparation

1. Boil the water.
2. Make a smooth paste by mixing flour with cold water.
3. Add the mixture to the boiling water, stirring to break up starch grains and prevent lumps.
4. Bring to a boil while stirring and cook for 5–10 minutes.
5. If very thick, dilute by adding water, stirring well.
6. Add the milk and fruit juice and stir.
7. Remove and serve in mugs, bowls or calabashes.