

HANDOUT 7.2. JOB AID 4: MANAGING ALTERED TASTE AND DRY MOUTH

1. Ask the client how long he/she has had altered taste.

- Altered taste can make things taste too sweet or salty, sour, bitter, metallic, garlicky, etc.

2. Ask the client if he/she is taking any medications

- Several medications used to treat HIV affect the sense of taste or cause dry mouth.
- Encourage the client to continue taking his/her medication as prescribed but to seek medical attention if the altered taste gets worse and he/she cannot eat.

3. Find out if the client has any infection.

- Thrush in the mouth or throat can make food taste chalky or metallic.

4. Ask the client if he/she has been able to eat.

- Find out what the client has been able to eat.
- Counsel accordingly and stress the importance of maintaining good nutrition even when not feeling well.

5. Counsel on ways to manage the altered taste.

- Use flavour enhancers such as salt, spices, herbs and lemon when preparing food to mask unpleasant taste sensations.
- Eat bland foods.
- Mask a metallic taste by drinking tart juices such as lemon or orange juice or adding vinegar or lemon to food.
- Try different textures of food—hard and crisp (e.g., fruit) to soft and smooth (e.g., rice pudding).
- Chew food well and move it around the mouth to stimulate taste receptors.
- Try to rinse your mouth out daily to prevent thrush by mixing 1 teaspoon of baking soda in a glass of warm boiled water.
- Try to rinse out your mouth before and after meals to help improve the taste of food.
- Eat with plastic utensils or hands to mask metallic taste.

6. Counsel on ways to manage dry mouth.

- Advise the client to eat soft, moist foods.
- Advise the client to add extra gravy or soup to food.
- Counsel the client to drink plenty of fluids, at least 5 cups a day.

7. Advise the client to continue to eat his/her regular diet

MEAL IDEAS TO HELP MANAGE ALTERED TASTE OR DRY MOUTH

- Plain boiled soup made from meat, fish or chicken bones
- Porridge
- Pumpkin or onion soup
- Yoghurt
- Fruit salad
- Orange or lemon juice and clean boiled water between meals