

# Food Jags



Sometimes people with memory problems will only eat certain foods. This is called a food jag, and it happens when someone has a strong craving for a certain food, and is not satisfied when they are given adequate amounts of it. Food jags can last for a day or a week, and can be hard for a caregiver to deal with.

If someone is having a food jag, they may: repeatedly ask for the same food throughout the day, forget that they were given the food at a recent meal, get upset if they are not given the food, or hoard the food for eating at a later time.

## To encourage variety in meals try these simple tips:

**Offer alternatives or complementary foods along with the desired food,** to make sure that enough daily nutrients are eaten. For example, if the food jag is focused on peanut butter, offer it on a cut-up banana or apple, as well as bread to give variety in nutrients.

**Go along with the desired food especially if it is healthy.** This food often becomes less interesting over time, especially when other food items are offered at the same time.

**Try activities to distract attention away from the food.** Get out of the house, go somewhere with friends, or for a drive. It is easier to forget about food when it is not seen.

**Adapt the food that is craved into different dishes.** Soups, salads, and casseroles provide opportunity to include other ingredients which add nutrients. For example if cheese is the 'food jag' it can be added to salads or top off a soup.

If these suggestions do not work, and the food jag has continued for some time variety in foods eaten will be a concern. Try talking to your doctor for a referral to a dietitian.