

Food first advice for improving nutrition

At times some people need extra nourishment. This can be achieved by adding more fat and sugar into your diet than would normally be advised, as well as eating enough protein within a good variety of foods. This can help you put on weight, feel stronger, fight infection, improve wound healing or cope better with any treatment. If you are concerned about the effect of these changes on your blood sugar levels or heart health, please refer to the sections at the back of the leaflet.

Some ideas to help improve your appetite and make the most of your food and fluid

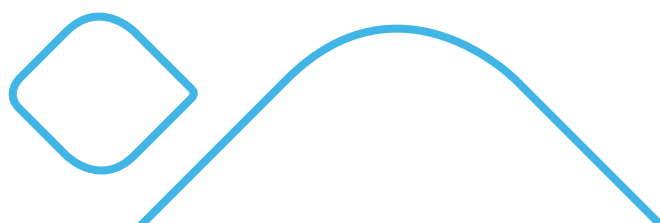
- Small frequent meals and snacks are a good way to increase your calorie intake, aim to eat every 2-3 hours.
- Fortifying your diet will help to make a small amount of food or drink more nourishing.
- Eat a wide variety of foods to help you get all the nutrition that your body needs.
- Include nourishing drinks and/or nourishing snacks between meals.
- Avoid drinking before meals as this can make you feel full, try taking drinks with or after meals but still aim to drink 6-8 cups/glasses of fluid a day. Make these drinks as nourishing as possible. Use whole milk (full fat).
- If you find preparing meals tiring, make use of frozen or ready-made meals and snacks.
- Try to get outside for some fresh air before meal times if possible.

Vitamins and Minerals

It is a good idea to take a 'one a day' A-Z multivitamin and mineral tablet whilst you have a poor appetite as you may be deficient in some nutrients. This can be purchased in a Supermarket, high street retailer or a pharmacy and should not be expensive. Please consult your GP if you are unsure if vitamins or minerals have already been prescribed. It is important not to double up on vitamin and mineral tablets.

Food Fortification

Try simple ways to increase the energy and protein content of meals. Initially aim to fortify one dish per meal. Ideally choose from the higher protein options such as milk, nut butters, ground nuts, cheese and lentils as well as other items listed.



Milk



- Add milk to soups, yoghurts, desserts, hot drinks.
- Make custard and milk based pudding with $\frac{1}{3}$ cream and $\frac{2}{3}$ milk.
- Mash milk into potatoes.
- Sauces are useful to make meals more palatable and nourishing. Try making milky or creamy sauces with fortified milk (recipe overleaf) and flavour with cheese or herbs and serve with pasta, potato, vegetables, meat and fish.
- Serve evaporated or condensed milk with fruit or jelly.

Nut butter and ground almonds

- Add a tablespoon of your preferred nut butter to your porridge.
- Mix a tablespoon of ground almonds into soups, stews or puddings.

Cheese



- Grate cheese and sprinkle on top of meals, e.g. beans on toast, spaghetti bolognese, soup.
- Include in sandwiches and add to mashed potatoes.

Lentils, pearl barley and mini pasta shapes

- Add lentils, pearl barley or mini pasta shapes to soup, casseroles or stews.

Cream and Ice cream

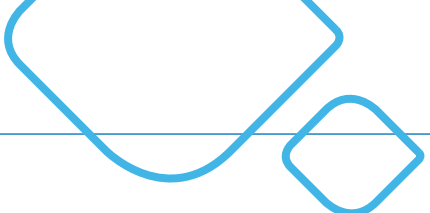



- Add cream to soups, yoghurts, desserts, hot drinks.
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Oil, butter and margarine



- Add butter or full fat spread to potatoes and vegetables.
- Drizzle olive oil on pasta.
- Oven roast potatoes and vegetables in oil.
- Thickly spread butter or full fat spread on bread and toast.



Mayonnaise, salad cream and dressings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include in sandwiches.• Add to salads, chips or baked potatoes.• Have coleslaw, or other mayonnaise dressed salads as a portion of vegetables.
Sugar, Honey, Syrup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use in hot drinks and hot puddings e.g. pie crumble or milk based puddings.• Add to porridge and breakfast cereals.• Drink fizzy drinks and cordials that contain sugar.• (use sparingly, if at all, if you have Diabetes)
Chocolate, dried fruit and marshmallows	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add grated chocolate, chopped nuts or dried fruit to hot puddings, cold desserts, cereals or porridge.• Sprinkle chocolate or marshmallows on hot drinks.

Nourishing Drinks

- Aim for **two** nourishing drinks per day to help prevent weight loss and encourage weight gain.
- Have nourishing drinks in between your meals, not in place of a meal!
- Choose full fat and full sugar products rather than 'diet', 'sugar free' or 'skimmed' varieties as these provide more calories.
- Use milk, dairy-free milk alternatives (avoid nut milks where possible as these are lower in energy and protein) or fruit juice as base ingredients in your drinks rather than water.
- Relax with a warm milky drink such as Horlicks®, Ovaltine® or drinking chocolate before bed.

Make fortified milk to boost protein and calorie content. Add 5 tablespoons of dried milk powder to 1 pint of milk, stir until dissolved and use like regular milk. Marvel or supermarket-own brands are available.

Try the following recipes:

Fortified Milkshake - Serves 1 (220ml)

Ingredients:

- **2 generous tablespoons (30g) skimmed milk powder**
- **5 heaped teaspoons (25g) of milkshake powder** e.g. Ovaltine Original Add Milk, Horlicks Malted Food Drink
OR 4 heaped teaspoons (20g) of milkshake powder if using milkshake powder that is already fortified with vitamins e.g. Aldi Cowbelle, Asda Milkshake Mix, Lidl Goody Cao, Morrisons Milkshake Mix or Nesquik
- **1/3 pint (180ml) whole milk**



Directions:

1. Mix milk powder and milkshake powder / Ovaltine / Horlicks together in a glass
2. Gradually mix in milk and stir well

Fortified Fruit Juice - Serves 1 (220ml)

Ingredients:

- **10g (2x 5g sachets) egg white powder** which can be found in the home-baking section of most supermarkets or larger, better value packs can be purchased online)
- **40ml undiluted high juice squash or cordial** (not sugar free/diet/no added sugar)
- **180ml fruit juice** (try and use fruit juice with added vitamins e.g. *Vitafit (Lidl)* or *Tropicana Multivitamins*)



Directions:

1. Put egg white powder in a glass
2. Gradually stir in undiluted cordial or squash (do not whisk)
3. When mixed, gradually add in fruit juice, and stir well.

Recipes within leaflet adapted from 'Creating a fortified diet recipe book' How to optimise nutrition using food. Prescipp January 2022

Additional plant based nourishing drinks recipes can be found in the following resource:

Nourishing-Plant-Based-Recipes-Dec-2021.pdf (patientwebinars.co.uk)

<https://patientwebinars.co.uk/condition/malnutrition/further-information-hand-outs>



Nourishing Snacks

Try eating one nourishing snack between meals (i.e. mid-morning, mid-afternoon, before bed)

Sweet Options

- Milky puddings* (rice pudding, tapioca, custard, mousse).
- Yoghurt* (not low fat), individual trifle or mousse.
- Chocolate, biscuits, cakes, pastries.
- Breakfast cereal (with fortified milk*) or cereal bars.
- Tea cake, tea bread, malt loaf with butter/spread and jam or scone with jam and cream.
- Croissants and waffles.
- Dried fruit or fruit and nut mix.

Savoury Options

- Cheese*, pate* or hummus* with crackers, bread sticks or biscuits.
- Crisps, nuts*, Bombay mix.
- Pork pie*, sausage roll*, scotch eggs*, cocktail sausages*, slices of pizza* or quiche*.
- Pasties and samosas.
- Toast, crumpets or muffins with butter or spread.
- Peanut butter* on toast, cheese* on toast, beans* on toast.
- Ham* or cheese* sandwiches.
- Cheese* with pineapple or sliced apple.

*these options are higher in protein

Meal ideas

Breakfast

- Porridge with whole or fortified milk and cream.
- Swiss style, or crunchy muesli cereals with yoghurt (not low fat) and fresh fruit
- Croissant, waffles, crumpet, bread or toast with butter or spread and jam, chocolate spread, marmalade, peanut butter or cheese spread.
- Cooked breakfast with egg (e.g. fried or scrambled with whole or fortified milk and butter) bacon or sausage (preferably fried) with buttered toast or fried bread.

Light meals

- Nourishing soup, homemade "cream of" or "Big Soup" style. Add extra cream, cheese, meat or lentils. Serve with buttered bread or crumpet.
- Meat, cheese, cream cheese and pineapple, egg or tinned fish sandwiches. Use butter or full fat spread and add full fat mayonnaise or dressing. Or try toasted sandwiches as an alternative.
- Fried beef burger, sausage or fish fingers in a buttered bread roll.
- Toast with baked beans and grated cheese, scrambled egg, pilchards, sardines, cheese and Marmite, banana or peanut butter.

- Jacket potatoes with tuna and mayonnaise; baked beans and cheese; chilli-con-carne; chopped bacon or ham with cheese.
- Omelet with coleslaw and French bread.
- Quiche made with cream, whole or fortified milk served with potato salad.
- Cauliflower or macaroni cheese made with whole or fortified milk served with pitta bread.
- Pizza topped with extra cheese or bacon.
- Scotch egg, pork pie or sausage roll with baked beans.

Main meals

- Spaghetti bolognaise - fry minced meat, toss spaghetti in butter and add grated parmesan cheese on top.
- Shepherd's Pie - add cream, whole or fortified milk, butter or cheese to the potato. Instant potato is a useful and quick alternative to fresh mash.
- Fisherman's Pie - add a creamy cheese sauce to the fish and fortify potato as for shepherd's pie.
- Roast chicken with condensed mushroom soup sauce or white sauce served with rice.
- Tinned salmon with parsley sauce and mashed potato.
- Lasagne or pre-packed pasta dish, topped with grated cheese.
- Toad in the Hole.
- Meat or fish curry – add coconut milk or cream and serve with deep fried Puris or Paratha.

Serve these meals with vegetables or salad and, where appropriate, chips, potato, pasta, or rice (preferably fried).

Desserts


- Yoghurt – Thick and Creamy or Greek (not low fat) or Fromage frais.
- Ice cream with tinned fruit.
- Blancmange, Instant Whip or Angel Delight made with whole milk.
- Jelly made with condensed or evaporated milk.
- Tinned or homemade milk puddings (rice, sago, tapioca).
- Bananas and custard.
- Pies, tarts and crumbles served with custard or cream.
- Sponge puddings served with custard or cream.

Reduced sugar or sugar free alternatives may be used if you have diabetes.

Desserts should be made with whole or fortified milk. Tinned and bought varieties of desserts are useful when your appetite is poor and cooking or food preparation is difficult.

Additional help: Ready-made meals

- If you are having difficulty preparing meals consider ready-made meals, either from the supermarket (M&S have a mini-meal range for smaller appetites) or a frozen meal delivery service (Wiltshire Farm Foods, Oak House Foods). Often special dietary requirements can be met e.g. diabetic, vegetarian, gluten free, texture modified. Avoid low calorie or diet versions.

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- Wiltshire Farm Foods Freephone 0800 773773 www.wiltshirefarmfoods.com or email info@wiltshirefarmfoods.com
 - Oakhouse Foods Freephone 0845 6432009 www.oakfoods.co.uk
 - If you already have ready prepared meals, consider adding some frozen vegetables (topped with butter) and a slice of bread and butter to help increase the nutritional value.

Nutritional Supplement Drinks

If your appetite is very small, you could consider buying nutritional drinks such as Complan® or Meritene®. These can be made up with whole milk and are good for between meals as a nourishing drink. They are available to buy over the counter from most supermarkets and pharmacies.

Food safety

Food safety is important to prevent infections from contaminated food and even more important when you are unwell.

- Always wash your hands before cooking or handling food. Dry them on a clean towel.
- Some foods can be cooked from frozen. Other foods, such as meat, must be thawed thoroughly before cooking. Thaw in a refrigerator and follow packet instructions.
- Keep meat, fish and poultry away from other foods to prevent contamination. Wash chopping boards and utensils carefully – especially after using them for raw foods.
- Wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly before use.
- Allow hot foods to cool before putting in the fridge or freezer.
- Use plastic containers/tubs or cover food to store in the fridge. Do not leave food in cans.
- Only keep leftover food for 2 days in the fridge and not beyond the 'use-by date'.
- Do not let rubbish build up in the kitchen or kitchen bin.
- Keep pets away from food and work surfaces in the kitchen.

Diabetes

If you have diabetes and you normally check the sugar (glucose) in your urine or blood, you should continue to do this regularly and contact your Practice Nurse or Diabetes Nurse if you have trouble keeping your results within normal limits.

Healthy Heart

If you have a high cholesterol level you can still follow the advice in this booklet whilst needed to improve dietary intake or to gain weight. Vegetable fats/oils are healthier choices than animal fats, so use a full fat olive based spread instead of butter, and use vegetable oil (rapeseed or olive oil) for cooking.

Choose less of the fatty meats and pastry items but have more dried fruit, nuts, flapjacks, fruit bread or teacakes with spread and jam for snacks. Nourishing drinks can be made with fortified whole milk but avoid adding cream.

Vitamin D

Vitamin D is obtained from sunlight and is needed to help absorb and utilise calcium. Vitamin D can be found in some fortified dietary items such as eggs, fat spreads and cereals. However, as it is only present in a small number of foods it can be difficult to obtain enough vitamin D. It is therefore recommended that everyone takes a 10µg supplement of vitamin D daily throughout the year. If you get good sun exposure between the end of March to end of September, you may not need to take the supplement during these months.

If your appetite does not improve or you have concerns about your weight, please contact your GP or district nurse.

If you have any queries contact:

Nutrition and Dietetic Services

Tel: (01225) 824398 (RUH), Tel: (01225) 833916 (St Martin's)

Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust
Combe Park, Bath, BA1 3NG 01225 428331 | www.ruh.nhs.uk

If you would like this leaflet in email form, large print, braille or another language, please contact the Patient Support and Complaints team on 01225 825656.

Recipes within leaflet adapted from 'Creating a fortified diet recipe book' How to optimise nutrition using food. Prescipp January 2022.

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