

# Nutrition Drinks (known as Oral Nutritional Supplements) Advice for patients and carers

## The importance of good nutrition

- We need food and water to give us the essential nutrients (e.g. energy, protein, vitamins) to keep us active and well
- If you are unwell or recovering from an illness you may not feel like eating and drinking
- Your illness, medicines and/or treatment may make things taste different, affect your appetite and make you feel full more quickly
- You have been prescribed nutrition drinks (oral nutritional supplements) in addition to your diet to help meet your energy and nutrient needs
- Ideas on how to boost your usual diet are given in a separate information sheet 'Your Guide to Making the Most of your Food'

**If you continue to lose weight please see your GP or Dietitian**

## What are oral nutritional supplements?

Oral nutritional supplements are specially made to contain energy, protein, vitamins and minerals. They are available in drinks, soups and desserts to help people who are finding it difficult to eat enough to get the nutrition they need. Oral nutritional supplements can help you gain weight or stay at a healthy weight. They may also help you to cope better with an illness, tolerate treatments or recover from illness.

## How many oral nutritional supplements should I take and how do I take them?

- Everybody is different. Your healthcare professional can give advice on how many oral nutritional supplements you need to take each day and which types might be best for you. Prescriptions are often between 1 and 3 oral nutritional supplements a day

Oral nutritional supplement/s:

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.....

Number of bottles/pots/sachets to take per day:

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- Oral nutritional supplements will help improve your dietary intake. It is important that you take the recommended number/dose each day but if you have trouble managing the amount recommended do let your healthcare professional know
- In general, people take oral nutritional supplements when they most feel like drinking or eating them. This could be between meals, like a snack, first thing in the morning or before bed time. Others find that taking small amounts of their supplements regularly throughout the day helps. Oral nutritional supplements can also be included in some of your favourite recipes too (see section on next page)
- Most oral nutritional supplements (drinks & desserts) taste best cold but can be heated if you prefer. Soup and savoury styles are better warm
- You should shake nutrition drinks well before opening
- You can drink most oral nutritional supplements straight from the bottle using a straw if provided or you can pour it into a glass or cup



## Getting the most from oral nutritional supplements

As our tastes differ there are many different types of oral nutritional supplements available.

**Style:** Oral nutritional supplements are available in the style of milkshakes, juices, yogurts, desserts and soups.

**Size:** There are different sizes of oral nutritional supplements to suit different appetites.

**Flavour:** There are lots of flavours available to try so you don't have to just pick one. Starter variety packs are also available. Speak to your healthcare professional about the different flavours available.

**Texture:** Some drinks are pre-thickened which are helpful if you find swallowing difficult.



SERVING SUGGESTIONS

## Cooking and heating oral nutritional supplements

Some people may prefer to take oral nutritional supplements warm or incorporated into foods and drinks. For example, oral nutritional supplements can be gently warmed to make hot chocolate or used to enrich a variety of meals, desserts and drinks. You can replace milk in sauces, cakes, desserts and drinks with a milkshake style oral nutritional supplement. If warming pour the oral nutritional supplements into a pan or microwavable dish and warm through gently without boiling as boiling may alter the taste and damage the heat-sensitive vitamins.



JELLY DESSERTS



HOT DRINKS



RICE PUDDING DESSERT

## Can I freeze oral nutritional supplements?

Yes, place the oral nutritional supplements into a freezer safe container or ice cube tray and freeze. Juice style oral nutritional supplements freeze well, just pour into an ice cube tray or ice lolly mould and freeze. Milkshake-style oral nutritional supplements can be used to make ice cream.



ICE CREAM



FROZEN JUICE STYLE SUPPLEMENTS

## How should I store oral nutritional supplements?

If they are unopened, oral nutritional supplements can be stored in a cupboard out of sunlight. Once opened they should be stored in the fridge – check the label for instructions to see how long they can be safely stored in the fridge after opening.

## Who should I speak to if I have more questions about my oral nutritional supplements?

Please speak to your healthcare professional if you have further questions about your oral nutritional supplements, they may also be able to supply you with further recipe ideas/suggestions. You may also find the answers to your questions on the websites of the companies that produce the supplements.

- If you are worried about weight loss you can check if you are losing too much weight, and are malnourished, by using a simple online screening tool that has been created by the British Association of Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (BAPEN) - <https://www.malnutritionselfscreening.org>
- If you have used some of the ideas in this leaflet and have continued to lose weight unintentionally or are concerned about your diet please see your GP who may refer you to a Dietitian.