

Your Guide To Making the Most of Your Food

Advice for patients and carers

This leaflet provides some simple ideas on how you can get the most nutrition from the food you are eating.

If you have a medical condition, food allergies or issues with swallowing for which you have received special dietary advice, the information in this leaflet may not be right for you.

Please discuss with your healthcare professional.

Little and Often

- Eating smaller meals with snacks and nourishing drinks in between may be best for you
- Try having drinks separately from meals, as the liquid can fill you up
- Try having a pudding once or twice a day such as full fat yogurt, ice cream, cake, custard, rice pudding
- Snacks in between meals can help you to eat more each day

Snacks Ideas:

Sandwiches, fruit cake, nuts, Bombay mix, crisps, cereals, soups, yogurts, finger foods (e.g. sausage rolls, scotch eggs, samosas), toasted tea cakes with butter, crackers and cheese, toast + topping (e.g. beans, scrambled egg, butter), tinned fruit in syrup



Enriching your Food/Adding Extra Calories

- Choose full fat/full cream/with sugar foods rather than low fat/low sugar types e.g. full fat yogurts, full cream milk
- Add cheese or ground nuts to soups, mashed potatoes, vegetables, pasta dishes, curries
- Use butter, mayonnaise, olive oil or salad cream in sandwiches, on potatoes, yams and salads
- Add extra butter, margarine or ghee to vegetables, scrambled eggs and bread
- Add cream or condensed milk to puddings
- Add sugar, jam, honey or milk powder to porridge, breakfast cereals or puddings
- Use cooking methods that add oil e.g. frying and if you roast or grill then brush generously with oil. Healthier options include either polyunsaturated oils (e.g. sunflower, soya, corn) and monounsaturated oils (e.g. olive, rapeseed)



NB: Vegan options (e.g. vegan cream, cheese, mayonnaise, spreads) are available. If you are following a vegan diet try to include a range of plant based protein sources in your diet (e.g. tofu, beans, pulses, nuts)

Nourishing Drinks

- Milk is full of goodness. To make fortified milk, mix 4 tablespoonfuls of milk powder into a paste with some milk and stir or whisk the mixture into one pint of milk. This can be used throughout the day in drinks, on cereals, in sauces, to make custard
- Using full cream milk (including fortified milk) to make the following drinks is also a good idea:
 - Hot chocolate or cocoa
 - Coffee and cappuccinos
 - Malted drinks
 - Milkshakes or smoothies
 - Soya, rice, coconut, oat or almond can be used if you have dietary intolerances or follow a vegan/plant based diet. Lactose-free milk is also available.
- Choose fruit juices and sugar containing squashes
- Nutrition supplement drinks (most often powdered) are available from most pharmacies and supermarkets as well as online and can be used between meals



Other Helpful Hints

- Eat foods you fancy
- Try not to miss or skip meals
- Ready meals (frozen or tinned) are easy
- Add some frozen vegetables to make a more balanced meal
- It is useful to keep a store of some basic foods in case you are not able to get to the shops e.g. long life milk, skimmed milk powder, tinned meat and fish, ready meals, hot chocolate, tinned or frozen fruit and vegetables, cereals, biscuits
- If preparing food is too much, why not consider meal delivery services or ask friends and family for help with shopping, preparing and cooking meals
- Try to have company at meal times, e.g. with a friend or family member or attend a local lunch club
- If food choice and quantity is limited take a “one-a-day multivitamin and mineral supplement”
- Information on increasing the protein in your diet and high protein foods can be found at <https://www.malnutritionpathway.co.uk/library/proteinideas.pdf>
- A little exercise or activity can help you feel hungry



- **If you are worried about weight loss you can check if you are losing too much weight, and are at risk of becoming 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.**