

# How to make the most out of your food

Nutrition & Dietetics

## Who is the leaflet for?

Anyone who is losing weight without trying or who is already underweight may follow the advice given in this leaflet. This advice is also suitable for people who have lost interest in food and are finding it difficult to eat their usual meals. The aim of this leaflet is to help you get as much nutrition as possible in each mouthful of food or drink.

There are many things that can cause a poor appetite. Therefore, if you have not already done so, it may be worth discussing your weight loss or poor appetite with your doctor or nurse.

## Why should I bother eating when I don't feel like it?

Your appetite is not a good guide as to what your body needs. Even though you may not feel like eating, nutrition is important to help fight infection and for wound healing. Weight loss can also lead to health problems and poor appetite and therefore it is easy to slip into a cycle of the less you eat the less you want to eat.

## When should I eat?

If your appetite is poor you may only manage very small amounts to eat. Therefore you should aim to eat two to three small meals and three between meal snacks every day. Do not go longer than two to three hours between meals or snacks, this will not help your appetite. Ideas for small nutritious meals, snacks and nutritious drinks are given later in this leaflet.

Try and plan meals when you feel a bit more like eating, leaving quick and easy snacks for when it's more difficult to eat. If you have a hospital appointment, think about taking a drink and a snack with you.

## What should I eat?

You need to try and get as much nutrition into each mouthful as possible. For extra calories try adding cream, butter, mayonnaise to foods and use full fat (whole) milk as your usual milk. For extra protein try adding skimmed milk powder to your milk and cheese to savoury foods. Avoid 'low fat' or 'diet' versions of food. There is more advice on what foods to eat later in this leaflet (from page 3).

## What should I eat if I already follow a special diet?

It depends on why you already follow a diet.

**The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.**

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

**High cholesterol:** If you are losing weight or are not eating well, it is probably OK to forget the low fat diet for the time being. You can go back to watching the fat you are eating, when you are feeling and eating well and are back to your usual weight. If in doubt, talk to your doctor or dietitian.

**Diabetes:** If you are losing weight without trying or not eating well, you need the extra fat to get enough calories in to prevent you from losing weight. This will not affect your day to day diabetes control. However, you should still avoid very sugary foods, like ordinary soft drinks, sugar, sweets, sugary cakes and puddings like doughnuts, syrup or jam sponge puddings, iced cakes or biscuits. Again, if in doubt talk to your doctor or dietitian.

There is more advice on foods that are high in fat or sugar later in this leaflet.

## How do I add extra calories and protein to ordinary foods?

The following gives examples on how to boost everyday foods and meals with protein and calories. This advice is suitable for people with diabetes.

| Basic food  | How to add extra calories and protein   |
|---|---|
| <b>Milk (One pint)</b>  | Mix 2oz or four tablespoons of skimmed milk powder to three to four tablespoons (taken from one pint) of full fat milk into a paste. Then gradually whisk in the remaining milk and use in place of ordinary milk throughout the day. We call this "fortified" milk. Aim to use a pint of each day.                             |
| <b>Mashed potato (One scoop)</b>                              | Mash with a small amount of full fat milk and a knob of butter and one tablespoon of double cream and/or one tablespoon of grated cheese.   |
| <b>Scrambled eggs (two) on hot buttered toast (one slice)</b> | Spread butter thickly on hot toast and add one tablespoon double cream to the scrambled egg and a knob of butter. Some people may like grated cheese sprinkled over the top.  |
| <b>Small tin baked beans or ravioli</b>                       | Sprinkle one tablespoon of grated cheese over the warm beans or ravioli.  |
| <b>Dahl with chappati</b>                                     | Add a knob of butter or ghee to an individual portion of dahl and add butter or ghee to the chappati dough before cooking, or spread on after cooking.  |
| <b>Portion of rice/pasta</b>                                  | Toss the cooked rice or pasta in a knob of melted butter. Choose pilau or egg fried rice rather than plain boiled or steamed.   |
| <b>Side serving of vegetables</b>                             | Add a knob of butter to warm potatoes and vegetables. Some people may like grated cheese sprinkled over some vegetables. Alternatively try stir fried vegetables as a change from steamed or boiled.  |
| <b>Portion of salad</b>                                       | Ensure you have a protein food (cheese, egg, beans, meat, fish) with salad. Add extra grated cheese or chopped egg and a dressing or mayonnaise to the salad.<br><br>* It is best to choose full fat mayonnaise which is bought in a jar. Avoid buying from a deli-counter or home made (because it may be made from raw eggs). |

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|--|---|
| <b>Grilled chicken, fish or steak</b>                    | Fry in oil instead or serve with a flavoured butter (eg parsley or garlic butter).                        |
| <b>Custard - a small dish made with full fat milk</b>    | Make from custard powder with fortified milk and stir in one tablespoon of double cream for each portion. |
| <b>Porridge, Ready Brek or other instant hot cereals</b> | Make up using fortified milk and add one tablespoon of double cream and sugar or syrup to taste.          |

## Are sandwiches okay to eat?

You can boost the nutrition of sandwiches in a similar way to hot foods. Spread your favourite bread or rolls thickly with butter or full fat margarine. The following give some ideas on nutritious fillings:

| <b>Basic filling</b> | <b>How to add extra calories and protein</b>  |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>Cheese</b>        | Mix grated cheese with one to two heaped teaspoons of full fat mayonnaise or coleslaw.  |
| <b>Egg</b>           | Mash a hard boiled egg with a knob of butter and a heaped teaspoon of mayonnaise or grated cheese.  |
| <b>Tuna</b>          | Choose tuna tinned in oil rather than brine. Mash with two heaped teaspoons of mayonnaise*.   |
| <b>Chicken</b>       | Chop cooked chicken with two teaspoons mayonnaise. Try adding flavouring like mustard or curry powder or add a rasher of chopped cooked bacon.  |
| <b>Ham</b>           | Add a slice of cheese or a tablespoon of grated cheese or coleslaw.   |
| <b>Salad</b>         | Avoid a plain salad sandwich – salad has very few calories and no protein. Best to have salad with one of the above fillings, or make into a BLT (bacon, lettuce and tomato) with a teaspoon of full fat mayonnaise. If you do decide to have a plain salad sandwich have with an oil based dressing, coleslaw or mayonnaise. |

\* It is best to choose full fat mayonnaise which is bought in a jar. Avoid buying from a deli-counter or home made (because it may be made from raw eggs).

## How do I make sure I get enough vitamins?

Have at least one portion of fruit each day, fresh, tinned and stewed all count. Add extra calories by having with fortified custard, cream, ice cream, evaporated milk, or making into a crumble or pie. If you can't manage any fruit try and have a glass of pure fruit juice (not squash or "pop") every day.

Have a small portion of vegetables or salad – prepared as suggested above with your meals.

## Should I take a vitamin supplement?

If you are managing a good range of foods, including a variety of fruit and vegetables you probably do not need a vitamin supplement. However, if you are losing weight or not able to eat fruit and vegetables a vitamin and mineral supplement may be a good idea. Those listed below are just a few available from chemists and supermarkets.

### One tablet a day

- Centrum advance multivitamin + multimineral
- Sanatogen A-Z complete multivitamin

- Healthspan Gold Multi-vitamins and multi-minerals
- Boots Complete A-Z
- Superdrug A-Z Multivitamins + Minerals
- Asda A-Z Multivitamins and minerals
- Sainsburys A-Z Multivitamins and minerals
- Tesco's Complete Multivitamins and minerals

#### **Liquid supplements**

- Centrum multi-vitamin and multi-mineral supplement
- Boots effervescent multivitamins (orange flavour) – does not contain any minerals

## **Suggestions for nutritious meals, snacks and drinks**

### **Breakfast**

- Glass of fruit juice and cereal with sugar and fortified milk or porridge made with fortified milk with cream, evaporated or condensed milk.
- Thick 'n' creamy yoghurt with hot buttered toast. Add peanut butter, cheese spread, egg or jam
- Sandwich or roll with bacon, sausage, egg, cheese or banana
- Glass of fortified milk with two digestive biscuits or a banana

### **Lunch, tea or supper**

- Hot buttered toast topped with cheese & tomato, scrambled egg, baked beans (with or without mini sausages), sardines or pilchards
- Sandwich or roll with a nutritious filling like egg or tuna mayonnaise\*, ham, chicken, salmon or cheese, with salad
- Omelette filled with cheese, ham and tomato and served with bread and butter
- Jacket potato with butter, grated cheese, baked beans, tuna mayonnaise\*
- Macaroni cheese or ravioli sprinkled with grated cheese
- Soup with croutons – avoid relying on tinned or packet soup it doesn't have enough protein or calories. However, you can make up condensed or packet soup with fortified milk

### **Puddings**

If you feel that a pudding is too much with a meal, have as a snack an hour or so after the main course:

- Custard (tinned or made up with fortified milk) or rice pudding with jam or some dried or stewed fruit
- Cake or sponge pudding with custard or cream
- Fruit (cut up fresh fruit, or a small dish of canned or stewed fruit) with evaporated milk, pouring cream or custard. Or use melted chocolate or chocolate sauce or whipped cream as a "dip"
- Individual desserts like trifle, mousse, fruit fool or pot of rice pudding with sauce

### **Snacks**

- Large rice pot
- Matchbox size chunk of cheese on two crackers with butter
- Mini pack of biscuits (e.g. bourbon)
- Thick 'n' creamy yoghurt
- Two slices of hot buttered toast (spread thickly with butter)

- Two crumpets with butter
- Handful of peanuts
- Small (50g) block of chocolate
- Samosa or pakora
- Jamaican bun and cheese
- Jam tart
- Small sandwich (One slice bread, buttered with ham, cheese spread or pâté)
- Mini pork pie or quiche
- Two cocktail sausage rolls
- Fried dumplings or plantain
- Small individual trifle
- Two finger Kit Kat

#### **Drinks**

- Milky tea with two teaspoons of sugar
- Coffee made with ½ milk (full fat) ½ water and two teaspoons of sugar
- Mug of Horlicks / Ovaltine made with fortified milk
- Glass of full fat milk (200mls) – use fortified milk, see recipe (page 3)
- Fortified milkshake (200mls) – this would also count as a snack

### **Fortified milkshake recipe**

Use 200mls fortified milk (see page 3 for recipe) and whisk in a milkshake flavouring (such as Nesquik or Crusha). In addition you could also add a scoop of ice cream and / or a tablespoon of double cream and / or some pureed fruit.

## English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

## Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

## Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

## Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

## Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

## Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。