

Nutrition Support

Ideas to help you maintain or gain weight

This dietary advice sheet gives some general information to help you make the recommended changes to your diet. If you need more detailed advice, or if you are following a special diet that makes it difficult to make these changes, please ask your doctor to refer you to a registered dietitian.

Why do you need to eat well?

- If you have a poor appetite, you may have lost weight or be at risk of losing weight.
- Eating too little may also affect your energy level.
- Lack of protein, minerals and vitamins may make you more open to illness or delay the healing process.
- It is important that you eat a balanced diet, to provide all the necessary nutrients. These can be provided by simple meals and snacks.

Meal Pattern

- Eating small, frequent meals and snacks during the day will be easier to manage than 3 larger meals if your appetite is poor.
- Aim for 3 small meals each day with 2-3 snacks or nourishing drinks in between.
- Meals and drinks should be high in calories and protein to meet your daily requirements.
- Drinks, snacks and meals can be fortified to make them more nutritious.

Protein Foods



Milk & Yoghurt

Aim for at least 568ml (1 pint) of milk a day. Use whole (full cream/silver top) milk if you are at risk of losing weight.

Fortify milk by adding skimmed milk powder to increase the protein and calorie content. Whisk 4 heaped tablespoons (about 50g/2oz) skimmed milk powder into 568ml (1 pint) milk.

Use milk or fortified milk in your:

- Tea, coffee or other drinks, such as malted drinks and hot chocolate
- Milky puddings, custard and milk jellies
- On cereals and to make porridge
- In savoury sauces, such as parsley, cheese or white sauce.

Meat and Fish

- Include at least 75-100g (3-4oz) meat, chicken or fish if you have a cooked meal.
- “Convenience meals” are a good standby to have in the fridge or freezer. Try fish in sauce, shepherd’s pie or lasagne.
- For a snack meal include smaller portions of meat or fish in a sandwich or on toast e.g. ham or corned beef sandwich, sardines on toast.



Cheese & Eggs

- Have a cheese or egg meal for a change e.g. cauliflower or macaroni cheese quiche, scrambled eggs or om



- For a snack meal have cheese or egg on toast, cheese & biscuits or cheese/egg sandwiches.

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- Include a milk-based dessert, such as milk pudding or custard (homemade or “ready to eat”), milk jelly or “pot desserts” such as thick & creamy yogurt, fruit fools and mousses. Use Greek yogurt or evaporated milk as toppings for fruit or cereal.

Beans & Lentils

To make soups or casseroles more nutritious, try adding tinned (ready to eat) beans such as butter beans or red kidney beans.

High Calorie Foods

- Calories come from the protein foods we have already talked about. They also come from fats and oils, cream, starchy foods (bread, potatoes, pasta and rice and breakfast cereals) and sugar.
- Margarine, butter and oil are all fats and contain similar numbers of calories.
- Do not use “light” or low-fat spread if you are trying to increase your weight.
- Add lots of butter or margarine:
 - Spread thickly on bread and crackers.
 - Mash into potatoes or melt on boiled or jacket potatoes.
 - Stir into hot pasta or rice and serve with a meat, cheese or vegetable sauce.
- Roast potatoes and chips are high in calories and are good to include in your diet
- Add double cream to soups, sauces and

- Try making a cheese sauce to put with vegetables, fish or pasta (or use a packet sauce and sprinkle grated cheese on top).
- Grated cheese can be mixed into scrambled eggs, mashed into potatoes with extra butter or margarine, or sprinkled onto a bowl of soup or beans on toast.

Nuts

Snack on plain, salted, dry-roast or chocolate-covered nuts.

Super Snacks

Here are some ideas for quick and easy snacks to have between meals. Those marked 😊 could be eaten instead of a meal if you do not have much of an appetite.

- 😊 Bowl of cereal with milk or fortified milk and sugar.
- 😊 Cheese, baked beans or sardines on toast.
- 😊 Cheese and crackers
- 😊 Sandwiches of tuna and cucumber, cheese and tomato, ham and pickle.
- 😊 Bowl of creamy soup and a roll.
- 😊 Peanut butter on toast

Yoghurt/fromage frais/mousse/fruit fool or any other individual pot dessert.

Scones, toasted teacakes, crumpets or muffins. Top with butter, jam, honey or



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puddings or use as a topping for cereals
or fruit.

cheese.

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Try adding sugar to drinks, breakfast cereals or fruit desserts.

Add jam, honey or syrup to cakes and scones.



Add dried fruit to cereals & milk puddings, or snack on raisins or dried apricots

Fruit & Vegetables

- Fruit & vegetables are important for vitamins. Include small helpings with meals but don't fill up on these, as they are low in protein and calories.
- Use the ideas mentioned to add extra calories and protein to fruit and vegetables.
- It may be advisable to take a '1-a-day' multi-vitamin and mineral supplement to help improve your diet.

All cakes, such as fruit cake, flapjack, sponge cake and cream cakes.

Nuts, any type, or mixed fruit and nuts.

Milkshake. Try adding fresh fruit and ice-cream for a "thick shake"

Malted drink made with milk and 2-3 plain biscuits.





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