Eating Well with a Poor Appetite

Helping you to live life well

Advice on nutrition for people who are at risk of developing malnutrition.
Food First Advice

Eating and drinking well will help maintain your weight and fight infections. When you feel unwell you may not feel like eating – just when your body needs the nutrition most!

This leaflet contains some tips and ideas to help make sure you can eat well to maintain your health, repair your body and recover from illness and gain weight.

If you are worried about your cholesterol levels or have diabetes, please contact your health care professional.

Poor Appetite?

- Eat little and often – try eating small frequent meals every 2-3 hours.
- Don’t skip meals – if you can’t manage a meal, try a milky drink instead e.g. milkshake, hot chocolate and a small snack.
- Feeling hungry? Make the most of it and eat more when you are feeling hungry e.g. if you are hungry most in the morning, try having a cooked breakfast, or snack if you find you are hungry between meals.
- Eat first, drink later. Drinking with meals can make you feel fuller sooner.
- Can’t be bothered cooking? Choose ready-made oven/microwave meals or tinned foods such as chilli, bolognaise, curry.
- A small glass of alcohol may stimulate your appetite – try having one 30 minutes before your meal (ask your doctor first to ensure it is suitable with any medications you take).
- Get out – fresh air can often help stimulate your appetite. Try going for a brief stroll or simply step outside for a while, before meals. Try to eat in a well-ventilated room.
- If possible try and make meal times a social time.
Making the Most of Your Food

How to enrich your food

To a pint of whole cream milk (blue or gold top) add: 2-4 tablespoons milk powder to make enriched milk. Use in place of ordinary milk or water to make up coffee, packet soups, sauces, jelly, milk puddings, porridge and on other breakfast cereals.

To milk based sauces add: cream/evaporated milk, grated cheese.

To puddings add: cream, custard, margarine/butter, evaporated/condensed milk, ice cream, yoghurt, jam/honey/syrup, dried fruit.

To soup add: grated cheese, cream, dried milk powder, evaporated milk, dumplings, baked beans, pasta, croutons.

To potato and vegetables add: grated cheese, cream/crème fraiche, margarine/butter, salad cream, milk based sauces, fried onions, chopped hardboiled egg, flaked fish, corned beef, bacon.

To breakfast cereal add: enriched milk/full fat milk, evaporated milk, yoghurt, syrup/honey/sugar/jam, fresh or dried fruit, nuts/seeds.

- Aim to have at least one pint of enriched milk a day – either by itself or in drinks and puddings (see above for recipes).
- Add cheese, cream or butter/margarine to vegetables, sauces, soups and mashed potatoes.
- Add extra sauces and gravies to meat, chicken and fish e.g. white sauce, parsley sauce.
- Use mayonnaise, salad cream, cheese, egg or avocado in your meals and snacks.
- Make puddings, using enriched milk and add extra cream, honey or condensed milk.
- Try to have a small glass of fruit juice a day.
- Avoid diet and low calorie products at this time – you can return to these once you are back to normal eating patterns. Try and choose full fat products e.g. full fat milk and yoghurt.
- Choose your favourite foods often – eating is to be enjoyed!

To get extra nourishment mix 4 heaped tablespoons of dried milk powder per pint of milk – this is called enriched or fortified milk.
Meal Ideas

Breakfast Ideas

- Creamy scrambled egg with buttered toast/muffin.
- Porridge/cereals with honey/sugar/jam and enriched milk.
- Crumpets with butter and jam/peanut butter/chocolate spread.
- Muesli with full fat yoghurt and fruit.
- Mashed banana on buttered toast.

Main Meal Ideas

- Stew with beans.
- Shepherd’s pie with grated cheese topping and buttered vegetables.
- Chicken curry or dahl with rice or chapatti spread with butter/margarine.
- Cauliflower or macaroni cheese made with enriched milk with grated cheese topping.
- Fish in cheese sauce with creamed potatoes and butted veg.
Snack Meal Ideas

- Crackers or digestive biscuits with butter and cheese.
- Scrambled eggs, tinned fish or beans on buttered toast with grated cheese topping.
- A buttered jacket potato with tuna mayonnaise filling.
- Ham or cheese omelette, chips and salad with mayonnaise.
- A creamy soup with added grated cheese and croutons.
- Sandwich with meat, fish, cheese, peanut butter or houmous.

Pudding Ideas

- Milk pudding e.g. rice/tapioca/semolina/custard.
- Baked egg custard.
- Crumble with ice cream or custard.
- Trifle with cream or chocolate/fruit mousse.
- Jelly made with enriched milk or ice cream.
- Yoghurt and fruit.
- Fruit cake.
Snack Ideas

If you have a small appetite, try having smaller, regular meals with snacks in between – aim for 2-3 snacks or nourishing drinks per day.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Snacks</th>
<th>Drinks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheese and crackers</td>
<td>Soup with milk/double cream</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dried fruit and nuts</td>
<td>Glass of full fat milk (blue top)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muesli bar or flapjack</td>
<td>Glass of enriched milk (make by adding 4 tablespoons milk powder to full fat milk)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small packet of crisps</td>
<td>Glass of fruit juice or smoothie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sandwich with meat/cheese</td>
<td>Milkshake</td>
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<tr>
<td>Piece of fruit</td>
<td>Soft drinks or cordial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chocolate biscuits</td>
<td>Nourishing drinks (see ‘Nourishing Drinks’ leaflet)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crackers and dip</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crumpets with spread</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheese on toast</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Softer options</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yoghurt or fromage frais</td>
<td>White crust less sandwich with creamy filling e.g. egg or tuna mayo/cream cheese/jam/smooth peanut butter/houmous</td>
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<tr>
<td>Custard</td>
<td>Pastry/pie softened with custard/cream</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chocolate or fruit mousse</td>
<td>Porridge/wheat bisk, malted wheats type cereal with milk/double cream</td>
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<tr>
<td>Milky pudding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mashed banana and custard</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creamed rice pudding</td>
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<td>Jelly and ice cream</td>
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<td>Crème caramel</td>
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<td>Self-saucing pudding</td>
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<td>Scrambled eggs</td>
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<td>Tinned fruit and ice cream</td>
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Store Cupboard and Fridge Ideas

If you can’t get to the shops regularly it’s useful to have a store of some basic foods. Choose foods and drinks that are full fat/sugar.

Ideas

- Whole milk/full cream milk (blue top) – long life/UHT/evaporated
- Desserts, mousses, yoghurts, fromage frais, and puddings – long life/UHT tinned or fresh
- Oils, margarines, butter and spreads
- Cheeses, both hard and spreadable
- Mayonnaise, salad dressings, houmous, coleslaw, dips etc.
- Cakes, crisps, biscuits – cream, chocolate, cheese
- Nuts and seeds (choose unsalted), dried fruit
- Drinks - Lemonade, cola, cordials (choose diet varieties if you have diabetes), coco, hot chocolate, long life fruit juice
- Jams, marmalade, lemon curd etc.
- Soups – choose ‘cream of’ varieties
- Instant mash, tinned lentils
- Tinned meat, fish
- Tinned fruit/veg including baked beans
- Breakfast cereals
- Crackers, crisp breads, biscuits, pasta, rice
- Ready meals - fresh or frozen
Contact Us

If you have any questions about this leaflet please contact:

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