

EAT WELL WITH A SMALL APPETITE

Many people who are ill or recovering from an illness find they lose their appetite and cannot eat as much food as usual. If you are eating less it is important to eat as nourishing a diet as possible.

This information sheet aims to give you some ideas on which foods may be easier to take and also to help you enjoy your food.

ADDING EXTRA ENERGY AND PROTEIN TO FOOD

Energy

Foods that provide us with energy are necessary to help our bodies use the extra protein properly. It is important to include:

- **Starchy foods** like bread, breakfast cereals, chapattis, naan, pitta bread, potatoes, rice and pasta – have a helping of at least one of these foods at each meal.
- **Sugar and sugary foods** such as jam, honey, syrup, lemon curd and chocolate spread are useful to add more calories to your food so try to use more of these foods.
- **Fats** are very concentrated energy foods. Using more butter, ghee, margarine, oils, cream and mayonnaise will greatly increase the calorie content of your food. Choose full fat foods wherever possible (e.g. milk and yogurts). These may be labelled 'luxury' or 'thick and creamy'. Avoid foods labelled 'lite/diet/low fat'.

Protein

This is important for wound healing and weight gain. The main sources of protein in the diet are meat, poultry, fish, eggs, milk, cheese, yogurt, pulses (peas, beans and lentils), tofu, Quorn and nuts.

Try to have 2 or 3 helpings of these foods each day.



Fortify your food by adding extra fat and sugar:

The following table gives you information and ideas on how you may do this.

Food fortification product	Portion size	Energy (kcal)	Protein (g)	Uses
Cooking oils, (e.g. rapeseed, olive, sunflower)	15ml (1 tablespoon)	135	0	Use in cooking e.g. to fry foods or roast potatoes. Add to stews, curries or dahl.
Butter, ghee or margarine	10g (2 teaspoons)	70	0	Use extra on bread and add to chapattis, pasta, vegetables and potatoes.
Single cream	15ml (1 tablespoon)	30	Less than 1g	Add to porridge, breakfast cereals, custard, rice pudding, yoghurts, instant whips/mousses.
Double cream	15ml (1 tablespoon)	65		
Cream cheese	30g (2 tablespoons)	95	3	Use in sauces or thickly spread on crackers, bread or toast.
Cheddar cheese	30g (size of a small matchbox)	125	7.5g	Add extra cheese to pizzas, mashed potato, milk based sauces, soup, pasta and vegetables.
Jam	18g (1 heaped teaspoon)	45	0	Use on bread, toast, crackers, biscuits, milk puddings, yogurt and in porridge oats.
Honey and syrup	17g (1 heaped teaspoon)	50	0	As for jam.

Sugar	6g (1 heaped teaspoon)	25	0	Add extra to breakfast cereals, drinks and desserts.
Dried skimmed milk powder	10g (1 tablespoon)	35	3.5g	*** Add 3 tbsp dried skimmed milk powder to 1 pint of full fat milk. Use this as you would normally use milk e.g. in drinks, on cereal, in puddings or sauces.
Evaporated milk	30ml (2 tablespoons)	45	3g	Add to custard, milk puddings, sauces, cream soups and use on porridge or other breakfast cereals.
Greek yoghurt	55g (1 tablespoon)	60/73	3g	Add to breakfast cereals, milkshakes, smoothies, desserts, curries, dahl, sauces, soups and savoury dishes.

Some more tips for increasing your food intake include:

- Eat smaller meals, but more frequently. Aim for 5-6 small, snack type meals throughout the day.
- A very full plate of food may put you off eating. Try having your food on a smaller plate and keep the portions small. You can always have second helpings.

- Do not fill up on low energy, filling foods like fruit and vegetables unless they are served with cream, ice cream or cheese sauce.
- Milk is a nourishing drink so try to drink milky drinks throughout the day. Choose full fat milk as it will give you more calories than a skimmed/semi-skimmed milk. Better still, use a fortified milk (see table above***)
- Make sure you have snacks readily available to nibble on whenever you can (see below for ideas).
- Try not to have low energy fluids e.g. water, tea, coffee just before eating as you may well be too full to then eat.

Remember everyone's appetite varies between good and bad days. Make the most of the good days by eating well and treating yourself to your favourite foods.



HIGH CALORIE SNACKS

All these snacks will give you extra calories. Even if you cannot eat the whole snack try to include food little and often.

- Crackers or oatcakes with cheese
- Packet of crisps/cheese crackers/Bombay spice mix
- Sausage roll or a few cold mini sausages
- Toast with butter or margarine and jam/marmalade/chocolate spread/syrup/peanut butter
- Plain, fruit or cheese scone with butter or margarine
- Chocolate biscuits
- 2 chocolate teacakes or mini rolls
- Cereal bar or cake bar
- Breakfast cereal with full fat milk
- Individual pot of full fat yogurt, mousse, trifle, crème caramel or crème brûlée
- Flavoured milk
- Small tub of luxury ice cream
- Slice of cake or cheesecake
- Individual fruit pie or egg custard



Suggested Meal Plan

Try to manage as much as you can at each meal. Remember, if you cannot manage a full meal, make sure you have snacks (from the list above) between meals.

Breakfast

- Fruit juice
- Cereal or porridge with fortified milk and cream, sugar, honey or syrup
- Scrambled egg (cream may be added)
- Bread, toast or chapatti – use plenty of butter, margarine or ghee and jam, marmalade, or honey

Mid-morning

- Tea/coffee – add sugar
- Milk drink, e.g. Malted milk drink, hot chocolate or milk shake – use fortified milk
- Snack from list

Mid-day Meal

- Soup – add cream/cheese/milk powder
- Meat, fish, eggs or cheese
- Vegetables/salad
- Bread, toast, chapatti, potato, rice or pasta
- Pudding, e.g. full fat yogurt, milk jelly, fruit and custard or milk pudding

Mid-afternoon

As for mid-morning

- Tea/coffee – add sugar
- Milk drink, e.g. Malted milk drink, hot chocolate or milk shake – use fortified milk
- Snack from list

Evening meal

As for mid-day (if you cannot manage a full meal make sure you include some fortified foods)

Bedtime

- Milky drink e.g. Malted milk drink, or hot chocolate
- Cheese and biscuits, sandwich, cereal with fortified milk or other snack from list

For further advice contact your Practice Nurse at your GP's surgery or your Dietitian Tel: