

This leaflet can help you to improve your diet if you have a poor appetite or have lost weight. "Food First" is food-based nutrition support aimed at providing a 'nutrient dense' diet. The aim is to provide around an additional 500 calories per day by using food fortifiers, snacks and nourishing drinks. This can be achieved by making 3 or 4 changes to your dietary intake per day.

General tips

- Use full fat products
- Try to eat 'little and often' throughout the day, aim for every 2-3 hours
- Try using a smaller plate, as a large plate of food can be overwhelming. You can always go back for more
- Try eating with others, where possible. We tend to eat more in company
- Try not to drink fluid just before a meal. This can reduce your appetite. Have drinks after or between meals
- Use frozen or ready-made meals & snacks if you find preparing meals tiring
- Companies who deliver meals e.g. Wiltshire Farm Foods, Oakhouse Foods and local providers e.g. 'Food Angels' can be helpful

Fortifying your diet: Increasing calories and protein

You can increase the nutritional content of your diet by adding small amounts of household ingredients ('food fortifiers') to normal food. This will make your food more nutrient dense without significantly increasing the amount of food to be eaten. Aim to fortify at least 3 foods per day.

Ingredient	How to use
Grated cheese (e.g. cheddar)	Sprinkle 2 tablespoons of grated cheese per portion e.g. soups, sauces, potatoes, vegetables, scrambled eggs
Double cream	Add 2 tablespoons to each serving of porridge, soup, desserts or fruit
Peanut butter/Hazelnut chocolate spread	Add 1 tablespoon to porridge, bread, crackers or toast
Greek yoghurt (full fat)	Add 2 tablespoons to fruit, cereal, puddings or pancakes
Skimmed milk powder	Add 1 tablespoon to porridge, soups, milk, custard or sauces

Nourishing snacks

If your appetite is poor your ability to eat your normal portion size is likely to have decreased. Snacking between meals will help you to increase your overall intake of food and nutrients. Try to have 2-3 small nourishing snacks per day in addition to meals, so that you are eating small amounts regularly (i.e. 'little and often').

- Crackers and cheese
- Handful dried fruit or nuts
- Packet of crisps
- Sandwich with cheese/meat
- Crumpet with spread
- Cheese on toast (1 slice)
- Mini pork pie/pasty
- Cereal/porridge with full fat milk/double cream
- Sausage roll
- Spring rolls

- Samosa
- Bread sticks and dips
- Onion bhajis
- Slice of pizza
- Danish pastry
- Individual Bakewell tart/fruit pie
- Individual cheesecake
- Doughnut
- Thick and creamy yoghurt pot

- Half a teacake and spread
- Pot of custard or rice pudding
- Slice of malt loaf and spread
- Cereal bar
- Slice of fruit/sponge cake
- Pot of mousse
- Crème caramel
- Half a scone with jam and cream
- Chocolate bar
- Small slice of flapjack

Nourishing drinks

Nourishing drinks can provide extra energy (calories) as well as fluid to help keep you hydrated. These drinks should be included in addition to meals, not as a replacement. Try to drink at least 6-8 cups of non-alcoholic fluid daily, including at least 2 nourishing ones. Try to have drinks that contain lots of calories rather than filling up on low calorie choices such as tea, coffee, water and sugar free/diet drinks.

Ideas for nourishing drinks

Fortified milk

- Take 1 pint of full fat milk
- Add 4 heaped tablespoons of skimmed milk powder to a small amount of milk, mix to a paste
- Mix well into the remaining milk
- Store in the fridge and use throughout the day
- Add to drinks such as coffee or tea

Fortified soup

Serves 1

- 1 cup/small bowl of standard soup
- 1 heaped tablespoon skimmed milk powder*
- 2 tablespoons double cream

Add skimmed milk powder and double cream to soup and mix well

Chilled banana drink

Serves 1

- 1 medium banana
- 150ml full fat milk
- 1 heaped tablespoon milk powder*
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 1 scoop ice-cream

Liquidise all ingredients and serve chilled

High calorie drinks (100-200 calories per serving)

- Full fat milk
- Milkshake or smoothie
- Coffee (made with full fat milk)
- Hot chocolate/malted drink (made with full fat milk)

High calorie coffee or hot chocolate

Serves 1

- 150ml full fat milk
- 1 heaped tablespoon milk powder*
- 2 tablespoons of double cream
- 1 teaspoon of coffee or 3 teaspoons hot chocolate powder

Mix well

Milkshake

Serves 1

- 200ml full fat milk
- 1 heaped tablespoon of milk powder*
- 1 scoop of ice-cream
- Milkshake syrup or powder to taste

Blend together until smooth and serve chilled

*to help mix skimmed milk powder well, mix to a runny paste with a small amount of milk or cream before adding the remaining liquid

Non dairy high calorie drinks tips

- Make homemade milkshakes or smoothies with fortified sweetened soya milk
- Add vegan ice-cream/soya yoghurt
- Add vegan protein powders e.g. pea protein
- Add fruit, maple syrup, ground almonds, cacao powder and nut butters to flavour

Peanut butter delight

Serves 1 (suitable for vegans)

- 35g smooth peanut butter
- 70g vegan ice cream
- 200ml soya milk
- 1 medium banana

Place all ingredients into a blender and blend until smooth

Banana and blueberry smoothie

Serves 1 (suitable for vegans)

- 1 medium bananas
- 150ml fortified oat milk
- 30g blueberries
- 15g oats
- 35g smooth peanut butter

Liquidise all ingredients until well blended and serve chilled

Vitamins and minerals

If you have a small appetite, it can be difficult to eat enough to meet all your vitamin and mineral needs. Vitamin and mineral intake can be supplemented by purchasing a one-a-day vitamin and mineral supplement.

Diabetes

If you have diabetes and your appetite is poor, extra snacks, food fortifiers and nourishing drinks may help prevent more weight loss. If you normally check your blood glucose levels, you should continue to do this regularly. If you have difficulty keeping your results within normal limits, contact your Practice Nurse or Diabetes Specialist for advice.

If your food intake or weight is not improving despite following this advice, please contact the healthcare professional that gave you this leaflet for further support

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