

‘Food First’ advice for improving nutrition

‘Food First’ is an approach to treating poor dietary intake and unintentional weight loss through the use of everyday nourishing foods and nourishing drinks.

FOOD FIRST: Ideas to help improve your appetite:

- Try to have smaller, more frequent meals
- Include nourishing drinks or nourishing snacks between meals (see list of nourishing drinks and snacks)
- Avoid drinking before meals as this can make you feel full, try taking drinks with or after meals
- If you find preparing meals tiring, make use of frozen or ready-made meals and snacks
- Try to get outside for some fresh air before meal times

Make the most of your food and fluids...

- Small frequent meals and snacks are a good way to increase your calorie intake, aim to eat every 2-3 hours
- Fortifying your diet will help to make a small amount of food or drink more nourishing
- Aim to drink 6-8 cups/glasses of fluid a day and make these as nourishing as possible

Vitamins and Minerals

It is a good idea to take a ‘one a day’ multivitamin and mineral tablet whilst you have a poor appetite as it may be difficult to reach your requirements for these. These can be bought at a supermarket or chemist and are inexpensive. It is important to not double up on vitamin and mineral tablets. Please consult your GP if you are unsure if vitamins/minerals have already been prescribed or if you may be prescribed any oral nutritional supplements that already contain these.

Additional help: Ready-made meals...

If you are having difficulty preparing meals consider ready-made meals, either from the supermarket or a frozen meal delivery service (Wiltshire Farm Foods, Oak House Foods). Often special delivery requirements can be met e.g. diabetic, vegetarian, gluten free, soft and puree. Avoid low calorie or diet versions of these meal options.

Contact information:

- **Wiltshire Farm Foods** Freephone 0800 773773 – www.wiltshirefarmfoods.com or email info@wiltshirefarmfoods.com
- **Oakhouse Foods** Freephone 0845 6432009 – www.oakhousefoods.co.uk

If you already have ready prepared meals, consider adding some frozen vegetables and a slice of bread and butter to help increase the nutritional value.

Food Fortification

Try these simple ways to increase the energy and protein content of meals.

Fortify with:	Ways to fortify foods:
<p>Oil and Butter</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add butter or full fat spread into potatoes and vegetables • Drizzle olive oil onto pasta • Oven roast potatoes and vegetables in oil • Thickly spread butter or full fat spread on bread and toast
<p>Cheese</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sprinkle on top of meals, e.g. beans on toast, spaghetti bolognaise, soup, casseroles • Include it in sandwiches e.g. ham and cheese, cheese salad, cheese and tuna mayonnaise • Add to mashed potatoes
<p>Sugar, Honey, Syrup</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak to your dietitian or diabetes nurse if you have diabetes before increasing sugar in meals/drinks. • Use in hot drinks • Add to porridge and breakfast cereals • Add to hot puddings, e.g. pie, crumble or milk based puddings • Drink fizzy drinks and cordials that contain sugar
<p>Mayonnaise and Salad Cream</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include in sandwiches, e.g. tuna mayonnaise or chicken mayonnaise • Add to salads • Put on chips or baked potatoes • Have coleslaw, or other mayonnaise dressed salads as a portion of vegetable
<p>Milk and Cream</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add to soups • Make custard and milk based pudding with 1/3 cream and 2/3 milk • Mash into potatoes • Make cream based sauces for pasta • Drizzle on top of desserts • Add to hot drinks, e.g. coffee, hot chocolate

Nourishing drinks: recipes and ideas

Fortified Milk

Make fortified milk by adding 5 heaped tablespoons of milk powder to 1 pint of whole milk (full cream or full fat).

Use fortified milk to make milkshakes, hot milky drinks, milk puddings, custard and packet desserts

This can add 200-300 extra calories per pint of milk

Hot Chocolate – 450 calories per serving (approximately)

150ml whole milk

2 heaped teaspoons milk powder

1 tablespoon hot chocolate powder

2 tablespoons cream

Malted Drink – 450 calories per serving (approximately)

150ml whole milk

1 heaped tablespoon milk powder

1 tablespoon malted drink powder

2 tablespoons cream

Milkshake – 300 calories per serving (approximately)

200ml whole milk

2 heaped tablespoon milk powder

1 tablespoon milkshake syrup or powder

Fruit Smoothie – 400 calories per service (approximately)

Blended fruit (e.g. 1 banana and a handful of strawberries)

200ml of whole milk

2 tablespoons milk powder

Scoop of ice cream or 2 tablespoons of yoghurt (not low fat)

Nourishing Cup-a-Soup – 300 calories per service (approximately)

200ml whole milk

1 heaped tablespoon milk powder

1 packet cup-a-soup (avoid low calorie or low fat versions)

Nourishing Snacks

Try eating one nourishing snack between each meal (i.e. mid-morning, mid-afternoon, before bed)

Sweet Options:

- Milky pudding (rice pudding, tapioca, custard, mousse)
- Yoghurt (not low fat), individual trifle or mousse
- Chocolate, biscuits, cakes, pastries

- Breakfast cereal (with fortified milk) or cereal bars
- Tea cake, tea bread, malt loaf with butter/spread and jam
- Scone with jam and cream
- Croissants and waffles
- Dried fruit or fruit and nut mix

Savoury Options:

- Cheese, pate or hummus with crackers or biscuits
- Crisps, nuts, Bombay mix
- Pork pie, sausage roll, scotch eggs, cocktail sausages
- Pasties and samosas
- Toast, crumpets or muffins with butter/spread
- Peanut butter on toast, cheese on toast, beans on toast
- Ham sandwich, cheese sandwich
- Slice of pizza or quiche
- Cheese and pineapple

Meal Ideas

Breakfast ideas...

- Porridge with whole or fortified milk and cream.
- Swiss style, or crunchy muesli cereals with yoghurt (not low fat) and fresh fruit.
- Croissant/waffles/crumpet/bread or toast with butter/spread and jam or chocolate spread/marmalade/peanut butter or cheese spread.
- Cooked breakfast with egg (e.g. fried or scrambled with whole or fortified milk and butter), bacon or sausage (preferably fried) with buttered toast or fried bread.

Light meal ideas...

- Nourishing soup, homemade "cream of" or "Big Soup" style. Add extra cream, cheese, meat or lentils. Serve with buttered bread or a crumpet.
- Ham, salami, corned beef, cheese, cream cheese and pineapple, egg or tinned fish sandwiches. Use butter or full fat spread liberally; with some mayonnaise or salad cream.
- Fried beef burger, sausage or fish fingers in a buttered bread roll.
- Toast with baked beans and grated cheese, scrambled egg, pilchards, sardines, cheese and Marmite, banana or peanut butter.
- Jacket potatoes with tuna and mayonnaise; baked beans and cheese; chilli-con-carne; chopped bacon or ham with cheese.
- Omelette with coleslaw and French bread.
- Quiche made with cream, whole or fortified milk and served with potato salad.
- Cauliflower or macaroni cheese made with whole or fortified milk and served with pitta bread.
- Pizza topped with extra cheese or/and bacon.
- Scotch egg, pork pie or sausage roll with baked beans.

Hot meal ideas...

- Spaghetti bolognese - fry minced meat, toss spaghetti in butter and add grated parmesan cheese on top.
- Shepherd's Pie - add cream, whole or fortified milk, butter or cheese to the potato.
- Fisherman's Pie - add a creamy cheese sauce to the fish and fortify potato as above.
- Roast chicken with condensed mushroom soup sauce or other white sauce served with rice.
- Tinned salmon with parsley sauce and mashed potato.
- Lasagne or pre-packed pasta dish, topped with grated cheese.
- Toad in the Hole.
- Meat or fish curry – add coconut milk or cream and serve with deep fried puris or paratha.
- Have these with vegetables or salad and, where appropriate, chips, potato, pasta, or rice (preferably fried).

Follow meals with a nourishing dessert...

- Yoghurt (not low fat)
- Fromage frais
- Ice cream with tinned fruit
- Blancmange, Instant Whip or Angel Delight made with whole milk
- Jelly made with condensed or evaporated milk
- Tinned or homemade milk puddings (rice, sago, tapioca)
- Bananas and custard
- Pies, tarts and crumbles served with custard or cream
- Sponge puddings served with custard or cream.

Reduced sugar or sugar free alternatives may be used if you have diabetes.

Desserts should be made with whole or fortified milk. Tinned and bought varieties of desserts are useful when your appetite is poor and cooking or food preparation is difficult.

Nutritional supplement drinks

If your appetite is very small, you could consider buying nutritional drinks or soups such as Aymes Retail®, Foodlink® or Complian®. These can be made up with whole milk (or soups with water) and are good for between meals as a nourishing drink. They are available to buy over the counter from most supermarkets and pharmacies.

Food Safety

- Always wash your hands before cooking or handling food. Dry them on a clean towel.
- Some foods can be cooked from frozen (NB: read label). Other foods, such as meat, must be thawed thoroughly before cooking. Thaw in a refrigerator and follow packet instructions.
- Keep meat, fish and poultry away from other foods to prevent contamination. Wash chopping boards and utensils carefully – especially after using them for raw foods.
- Wash fruit and vegetables thoroughly before use.

- Allow hot foods to cool before putting in fridge or freezer.
- Use plastic containers/tubs or cover food to store in the fridge. Do not leave food in cans.
- Only keep leftover food for 2 days in the fridge and not beyond the 'use-by date'.
- Do not let rubbish build up in the kitchen or kitchen bin.
- Keep pets away from food and work surfaces in the kitchen.

Diabetes

If you have diabetes and you normally check the sugar (glucose) in your urine or blood, you should continue to do this regularly and contact your Practice Nurse or Diabetes Nurse if you have trouble keeping your results within normal limits.

Healthy Heart

If you have a high cholesterol level you can still follow the advice in this booklet whilst needed to improve dietary intake or to gain weight. Vegetable fats/oils are healthier choices than animal fats, so use a full fat olive based spread instead of butter, and use vegetable oil (rapeseed or olive oil) for cooking.

Choose less of the fatty meats and pastry items but have more dried fruit, nuts, flapjacks, fruit bread or teacakes with spread and jam for snacks. Nourishing drinks can be made with fortified whole milk but avoid adding cream.

Vitamin D

All adults and children over the age of one should consider taking a daily 10µg supplement of vitamin D throughout the months of October to March (during the winter) which can be bought at most supermarkets and chemists. For further details discuss with your GP, pharmacist or dietitian.

Further information: wiltshirehealthandcare.nhs.uk

Created by Registered Dietitians

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If you would like this information in another format, i.e. large print or another language, please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0300 123 7797.

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