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Eating well with a reduced appetite

Nutrition & Dietetics

Clinician: _____

Contact number: _____

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Leaflet review date: May 2020

Patient Advice and Liaison Service

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- Steps to making the most of your food
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- Enriching
- Nourishing drinks / fluids
- Supplements

Appendix:

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- Cupboard foods
- Personal Meal Plan



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For further information about this service contact:

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Your Personal Plan

1.

2.

3.

Many people with an illness find there are times when they cannot eat as much as usual and they may lose weight as a result of a reduced appetite.

Therefore, it is important to choose foods which are more nourishing to help maintain or gain weight. Unplanned weight-loss can lead to tiredness, depression and you being more likely to pick up infections.

There are many reasons why you can have a reduced appetite and/ or food intake:

- Side effects of medication
- Constipation/ diarrhoea
- Sore mouth or taste changes
- Nausea & vomiting
- Poorly-fitting dentures
- Illness
- Swallowing difficulties
- Reduced mobility
- Stress, anxiety or depression
- Reduced access to food

The ideas in this leaflet will help you to make the most of what you are able to eat and drink.

Is cooking and shopping the problem?

Ask a friend or neighbour to help with the shopping. Otherwise, a carer, social services or your GP can provide the information.

There are meal delivery companies which will deliver ready-meals to your door for times when your motivation for cooking is reduced.

Supermarkets also have a range of ready-meals.

Steps to making the most of food:

1. Eat little and often

2. Have snacks between meals

3. Enrich your meals

4. Have nourishing high-calorie drinks

5. Take prescribed supplements

It is good to try having 1 serving of **energy-rich foods** such as bread, potatoes, rice, pasta, cereal or chapattis with each meal.

Try to choose wholemeal varieties where possible.



Aim for **5 portions of fruit and vegetables** per day. Include a glass of fruit juice, if little fruit is eaten.

Continue to monitor your weight each month, to check your weight remains stable

A varied, balanced diet

When your appetite improves and you are no longer losing weight, you should try to ensure that you follow a balanced and varied diet.

Try to include the following each day:

3 small meals (see pages 15-17)

2 – 3 snacks or milky drinks

at least **one pint of milk** daily (in food or as milky drinks)

at least **6 – 8 cups of fluid**

(tea, coffee, fruit juice, soups, milky drinks, water, etc.)



Try to also have 1 serving of **protein-rich foods** 2 -3 times per day, such as:

- meat
- chicken
- fish
- eggs
- cheese
- yoghurt
- nuts
- beans
- lentils



Step 1: Little and Often

Eating can become more difficult if we think of it as something we have to do, rather than something we want to do.

It is better to eat all of a small amount, than nothing from a large plateful. If you are up to it, a short walk before a meal might help stimulate your appetite.

Simple tips to help you gradually increase your food intake...

- Try a small glass of your favourite alcohol, if safe to do so with your medication, as it may help stimulate your appetite. (It is important to remember that normal healthy eating restrictions do not apply if your appetite is reduced).
- Start by remembering you need to eat something, as this will get your appetite moving in the right direction. Every mouthful counts.
- Make the most of good days and try to eat well on these days.
- If you find it difficult to eat your usual portion size, try reducing the size of your meals and serve it on a regular size plate. If you manage this well, try having second helpings.
- Try to relax and enjoy what you eat.
- Try to make meals look attractive.
- A bowl of breakfast cereal with full-fat milk is a nutritious snack and can be eaten any time of day.
- Try eating your favourite things. It is not necessary to stick to the food routine that your family follows.
- Cold meals are just as good as hot meals.
- Well-meaning relatives can make things worse by fretting over the amount eaten. So make sure you eat in a relaxed atmosphere without being pressured to eat all you are given.
- Don't worry if it isn't 'normal' foods at 'normal' times- if you fancy cereal at midnight, enjoy it!

Step 2: Snacks and High-Calorie Foods

Snacks are a useful way to increase your food intake

1. Good times to snack might be:
Mid-morning
Mid-afternoon
Before bed
2. Prepare a plate of little snacks or nibbles to have as and when you fancy.
3. Avoid low-calorie, low-sugar or low-fat products as they are low in energy.
4. It is best to eat every two hours or so and then only eat what you want to.



Ideas for nourishing snacks– **sweet foods:**

- Pieces of fruit with double cream or ice-cream
- Fruit loaf with butter
- Waffles & biscuits
- Gingerbread
- Full-fat yoghurts
- Fromage frais
- Rice pudding
- Custard
- Fruit pies
- Mousses / trifles
- Cake
- Chocolate
- Flapjacks
- Fruit cake squares
- Dried fruit
- Muffins or crumpets with butter and jam
- French toast
- Individual cheesecake

- **Freezer food:**

Vegetables (all kinds)
Chips
Cocktail sausages
Fish:
- fish fingers
- fish pie
Cartons of milk
Bread loaves and rolls
Pitta bread, naan bread
Pizza
Fruit
Sorbet/ ice-cream
Ice-cream filled lollies



- **Fridge food:**

Fresh soup
Full-fat milk
Cheese sauce
Salad (rinse before eating)
Various cheeses, including ready-grated
Soft cheese
Full-fat yoghurt
Ketchup, mayonnaise and pickle
Salad cream
Double and single cream
Butter or full-fat margarine
Mini quiches
Cocktail sausages



Store cupboard suggestions

- **Tins:**

Spaghetti in tomato sauce

Ready-made pasta sauces or pasta meals

Soup

Red kidney beans and lentils

Tomato purée (useful for thickening sauces)

Tuna

Tinned fruit

Rice pudding- chilled or hot

Custard

Evaporated milk

Condensed milk



- **Jars & bottles:**

Peanut butter

Jam/ marmalade

Sauces for pasta and rice

Chocolate spread

Oil-based salad dressings

Milkshake syrups



Ideas for nourishing snacks– **savoury foods:**

- Buttered toast fingers

- Rolls, buns or crackers with butter and cheese or jam

- Mini sandwiches

- Sliced meat, cut into pieces

- Chicken fingers

- Mini pizza/ quiche

- Fish fingers or fish cakes

- Cocktail sausages

- Potato waffles

- Smoked salmon slices

- Smoked mackerel slices

- Quarter hard-boiled eggs

- Cheese on toast

- Cheese cubes

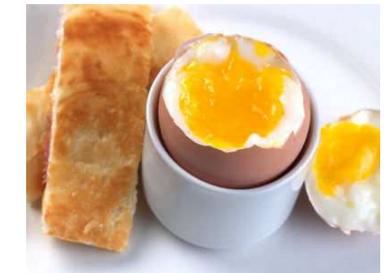
- Cheesy biscuits

- Cheese straws

- Cheese and crackers

- Savouries/ crisps

- Nuts



Step 3: Enriching meals

By adding a few ingredients to your meals you can significantly increase the amount of calories and protein your meal contains, without increasing the portion size.

To **breakfast cereals** add:

Enriched milk (see next page)
Evaporated milk
Yoghurt (full-fat)
Syrup, honey or sugar
Fresh or dried fruit



To **soup** add:
Grated cheese
Double cream
Skimmed milk powder
Evaporated milk
Dumplings
Baked beans
Pasta

To **potato and vegetables** add:

Grated cheese
Double cream
Full-fat margarine or butter
Salad cream
Milk-based sauces
Fried onions
Mayonnaise



Mid-afternoon snack:

Full-fat yoghurt
Fortified milk drink
Cake, biscuits, teacake, scone or crumpet with butter and jam



Evening meal:

Meat, cheese, fish, eggs or pulses.

Potato, rice, bread or pasta.



Vegetables – add butter or grated cheese.

Salad – add mayonnaise, salad cream or dressings, e.g. balsamic vinaigrette.

Dessert: as after lunch

Bedtime snack:

Fortified milk drink
Biscuits, crumpet or cake
Cereal with enriched milk
Sandwich
Toast with butter



Mid-morning snack:

Enriched milk drink
Full-fat yoghurt
Biscuits
Cheese and crackers
Milkshake

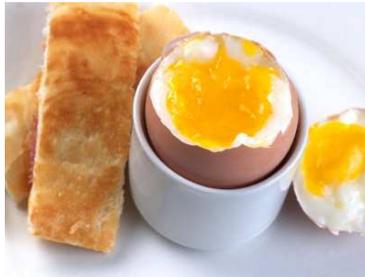


Lunch:

Enriched soup with double cream, bread and butter.



Toast with butter, beans, cheese, egg, ravioli or tinned spaghetti.



Sandwich with meat, cheese, fish or egg.
Add butter & mayonnaise.

Jacket potato with butter, cheese, beans, mayonnaise, sour cream or tuna.

Dessert:

Yoghurt
Mousse
Tinned fruit in syrup
Milk jelly
Custard
Trifle
Milk pudding
Ice-cream



To **desserts** add:

Double cream
Evaporated/ condensed milk
Custard
Full-fat margarine or butter
Ice-cream
Jam, honey or syrup
Dried fruit



Enriched milk

Ingredients:

1 pint full-fat milk
4 tablespoons skimmed milk powder

Mix the milk and powder together thoroughly, and use this when making foods such as:

- coffee
- packet soups
- sauces
- jelly
- milk pudding
- porridge
- breakfast cereals



Step 4: Nourishing high-calorie drinks

Drinks are a great way to increase both your fluid intake and calorie and protein intake.

Try to have a variety of nourishing drinks during the day.

Hot Drinks:

Horlicks™

Ovaltine™

Drinking chocolate

Bournvita™

Tea and coffee made with full-fat milk



Try adding milk powder, double cream, sugar or honey to increase calories.

Cold Drinks:

Fruit juice mixed with lemonade or tonic water

Fizzy drinks such as:

Coke

Lemonade

Lucozade™

Tonic water



Avoid the diet varieties of these, as they will not provide any extra calories.

High energy and protein meal ideas

Here are some examples of a high calorie and protein menu...

Breakfast:

Glass of fruit juice



Cereal with enriched or evaporated milk



Bread, toast or croissant with butter, jam, marmalade or honey



Egg (ideally fried), sausage, bacon, and/ or beans



Step 5: Prescribed Nutritional Supplements

If you have lost a lot of weight very quickly, your dietitian or another health care professional may feel it is necessary to supplement your intake with prescribed drinks.

These can either be a milk or juice-based drink or a whipped pudding.

It is important that you have these as well as your usual food.

They are usually only a short term treatment and should stop you losing further weight.



Over-the-counter Supplements

You could try Build up™ or Complian™ in-between meals.

These are available in a variety of sweet and savoury flavours, and they can give you extra nourishment if you can only manage small amounts of food.

A prescription is not required and they can be bought in supermarkets and chemists.

Supplement drinks need to be taken 1½ - 2 hours before or after eating meals.

Fruit Smoothies:

Blend fruit such as bananas, strawberries or tinned fruit in syrup, with fruit juice, milk, ice-cream, sugar or honey for a delicious and nourishing drink.



Not drinking enough fluid can lead to tiredness, feeling lethargic, nausea and headaches.

Try to drink a minimum of 6-8 cups of fluid everyday, unless otherwise advised by your health care professional.

Tips to increase fluid intake:

- Foods such as soup, jelly or ice lollies can increase your fluid intake as well as adding extra nourishment to your diet.
- Try using a straw and sip the drink often.
- Ensure you have a drink with you at all times.



Milkshakes

Here are a few recipe ideas for protein-filled, nourishing milk drinks.

100ml evaporated milk
100ml full-fat milk
20ml milkshake syrup
or 2 tsp milk shake powder
2 tsp sugar as needed
315 kcals, 12g protein



250ml full-fat milk
2 dessert spoons dried milk powder
2 tsp milkshake powder
2 tsp sugar as needed
315 kcals, 15g protein



100ml evaporated milk (warm)
100ml full-fat milk (hot)
3 tsp drinking chocolate
or Horlicks™ *or* Ovaltine™
2 tsp sugar as needed
300 kcals, 12g protein

100ml full-fat milk
1 tbsp double cream
1 scoop ice-cream
1 banana
3 tsp honey
440 kcals, 7g protein

