



Advice for patients on a high-protein and high calorie diet

Building healthier lives

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The importance of eating well

It is important to try and eat well to provide your body with energy and to help you feel stronger. This is particularly important during times of illness or medical treatment, if you have a poor appetite or have had unplanned weight loss.

This is because during times of illness or medical treatment, your body uses more calories and protein to heal and recover. Unplanned weight loss can then occur if your body is not receiving enough calories or protein.

This booklet will provide advice on how to increase the calorie and protein content of your diet. A high-calorie / high-protein diet will provide your body with more energy and help prevent weight and muscle loss.

If you are on a special diet, or have other factors affecting dietary intake (e.g. swallow difficulties or taste changes), or you have any other health concerns that may require you to limit fat and/or sugar (e.g. Diabetes or high cholesterol), this information may not be appropriate for you. Please ask your doctor or GP to refer you to a dietitian for further support.

Top tips to help improve your appetite and follow a high-protein and high calorie diet

- Try to eat little and often, have 6 small meals a day or eat every 2–3 hours
- Drink regular amounts of fluids, but avoid drinking large amounts right before a meal, as this may fill you up
- Try to have nourishing drinks throughout the day (this booklet will give you more ideas)
- Add extra calories and protein to your meals/snacks/drinks (this booklet will give you more ideas)
- If your energy levels change throughout the week; try to make the most of the 'good days' by preparing extra meals that you can keep in your fridge / freezer to have on the 'bad days'

- It is important to make the most of moments / days when your appetite may be better and you feel most well, even if this is not at your usual meal times
- Avoid low-fat and reduced calorie varieties of foods e.g. light yoghurts, skimmed milk, diet drinks, light spreads, as the aim is to increase your calorie intake as much as possible
- Keep a store cupboard of easily prepared food e.g. tinned meats and fish, UHT milk, evaporated milk, fruit juice, dried mashed potato, custard and rice pudding pots, stock up on frozen ready meals
- Eat food that you enjoy. If you are preparing food for others, it is important to remember that taste buds can change as we get older, older people may prefer sweeter food options than they used to
- Make use of meal home delivery services, supermarkets may also offer delivery services to make getting the food you need easier

Whilst you are in hospital

Whilst you are in hospital, your relatives/friends may wish to bring food in for you. Whilst we encourage you to eat as well as possible, due to food safety regulations, we are unable to reheat food on the wards for you. However, cold snacks or shop bought items that can be eaten without heating are allowed. The following snacks are available on the ward on request (at no charge):

- Cheese and biscuits
- Rice pudding
- Yoghurts
- Fruit
- Cake
- Biscuits

The following drinks are available on ward on request:

- Milk
- Squash
- Orange juice
- Tea
- Coffee
- Hot chocolate

If you miss a meal time (e.g. being off the ward for a scan or procedure) we have 'snack boxes' available. These include a sandwich, a carton of fruit juice, a piece of fruit and a small snack. Please ask a member of staff and they can collect one for you.

We need to ensure we still aim to eat a varied diet by including the different food groups including carbohydrates (starchy foods), protein, fruit and vegetables and dairy, see below for further information on some of these food groups. The following pagesd will provide information on how to increase the calories and protein of these food items and provide meal ideas which incorporate these food groups.

Starchy food

Try to include starchy foods with each meal, for example:

- Breakfast cereals
- Rice
- Pasta
- Potato
- Noodles
- Bread
- Tortilla
- Quinoa
- Couscous
- Bulgar wheat
- Paratha (flat bread)
- Chappati
- Crackers or crisp breads
- Green banana or plantain

Protein

Try to include a high protein food with each meal (two to three times per day).

Examples include:

- Meat (e.g. chicken, lamb, beef, pork, turkey, sliced meats, bacon, ham, corned beef)

- Fish (e.g. sardines, tuna, cod, salmon, mackerel, herring, trout, haddock, plaice, prawns, crab, mussels)
- Cheese (e.g. hard cheese, cream cheese, soft cheese, cottage cheese)
- Eggs (e.g. fried, scrambled, boiled, poached, omelette)
- Lentils, beans, dhal, chickpeas, peas (in curries, soups, broths, casseroles, stews)
- Nuts and seeds (e.g. peanuts, cashews, almonds, sesame seeds, linseed)
- Soya, Quorn™, tofu, tempeh, textured vegetable protein (TVP)

Fruit and vegetables

Fruit and vegetables are a great source of vitamins, minerals and fibre. Try to eat some fruit and vegetables daily; however have small portions of these with your meals as they can be filling and are low in protein and calories.

Consider eating with ice cream, cream or cheese to help increase the calories and protein.

Fortifying your meals, snacks and drinks

Meals, snacks and drinks can be made more nutritious without increasing the amount you need to eat, by fortifying them or enriching them. This is done by adding foods high in calories and/or protein. Every mouthful should be as nourishing as possible. The following are examples of ways you can fortify your meals and drinks:

Milk

- Choose full-fat (or Gold top Jersey) milk rather than low fat varieties
- Aim for one pint (568mls) per day
- The calories and protein can be increased by making fortified milk, see below:

How to make fortified milk using skimmed milk powder (e.g. Marvel or supermarkets own brand)

1. Take 4 tablespoons of skimmed milk powder
2. Add a little bit of full fat milk to make a paste.
3. Whisk in the remainder of the milk (total milk used: 1 pint)
4. Store in the refrigerator and consider using as below

Nourishing drinks

The above fortified milk can be used to make up some of the following drinks:

- Tea
- Horlicks
- Hot chocolate
- Ovaltine
- Milkshakes

Add to:

- Porridge or cereals
- Custard and milky puddings
- Savoury sauces e.g. parsley sauce, cheese or white sauce to add to pasta, vegetables, and fish

Other nourishing drinks:

Some nourishing drinks are also available for purchase from supermarkets or pharmacies, such as:

- Meritene Energis
- Complan
- Nurishment

See the table below for some quick ideas of what you can fortify and what to fortify these foods with

What to fortify	How to increase calories and protein						
Breakfast cereals	Dried fruit	Nuts	Cream	Yoghurt	Honey/syrup	Bananas	Jam
Potatoes	Cream	Grated Cheese/ Full fat fromage frais	Butter	Cooked bacon	Ham	Corned beef	Tinned fish
Sauces	Cheese	Cream	Fortified milk	Ghee	Butter	Peanut butter	Sugar
Soups	Grated cheese	Croutons	Dumplings	Noodles or pasta	Cream	Milk powder	Beans/lentils
Vegetables	Parsley sauce	Butter	Margarine	Cheese	Oil	Fortified sauces	
Salads	Salad dressing	Mayonnaise	Nuts / seeds	Hard boiled egg	Cheese	Fried fish/meat	

Snack and meal ideas:

Snack ideas:

If you are only managing small meals, ensure you take snacks in addition and in-between:

- Glass of full fat/ fortified milk/ milkshake with a biscuit / cake
- Peanuts / mixed nuts with raisins
- Crackers or digestive biscuits and spreading cheese or cream cheese
- Chocolate bar / cake or other sweets
- Mini pork pie / sausage roll
- Toast/ crumpet with butter and jam
- Individual desserts e.g. thick and creamy yoghurt / chocolate mousse / trifle
- Fried dumplings / plantain
- Crackers and avocado pear
- Hummus with pitta and break sticks
- Samosa / Pakora
- Crisps
- Bombay mix

Ideas for breakfast:

If you can manage even a little breakfast it helps you to eat better for the rest of the day:

- Cereal with full fat or fortified milk (see the table for ideas of how to fortify with toppings)
- Toast/ croissant/ butter muffins/ crumpet or mini pancakes with butter/ jam / peanut butter or chocolate spread
- Glass of full fat / fortified milk with biscuits
- Toast with scrambled egg/ cheese/ baked beans/ spaghetti/ sardines/ bacon/ sausage
- Sandwich/ roll with cheese, egg mayonnaise, tuna mayonnaise, meat, pate
- Omelette with grated cheese +/- meat with bread and butter or buttered toast

Main meals

These meal ideas are quick and easy to cook or some can be bought ready-made. You can use the food fortification ideas to further increase the calories and protein in these meals:

- Cauliflower cheese, mashed potato or potato wedges and vegetables
- Pasta dishes such as pasta bake, spaghetti Bolognese, lasagne, macaroni cheese or cannelloni with a portion of garlic bread
- Jacket potato with butter and filling e.g. cheese, tuna mayonnaise, bake beans, coleslaw
- Chilli con carne or Quorn™ with rice, topped with plain yoghurt.
- Meat, fish or vegetable pie or burger with chips, vegetables and baked beans or coleslaw
- Curry and rice with naan bread
- Omelette with grated cheese +/- meat with bread and butter or buttered toast
- “Cream of” soup with croutons / cream or grated cheese served with bread and butter or a sandwich

Puddings

- Milk puddings e.g. custard, rice pudding, semolina, sago, with jam, sugar or cream
- Individual desserts e.g. trifle, chocolate mousse, ice cream or full fat yoghurt
- Cake, fruit pie or sponge pudding with custard
- Tinned or stewed fruit with custard
- Asian puddings such as seviyaan/ halwa or gajrela/ kheer/ barfi

Nutritional supplement products

Your dietitian may suggest that you temporarily have a nutritional supplement drink on prescription, to top up what you are already eating. Advice will be given on the best type of nutritional supplement and how many you should aim to have each day.

Supplement tips:

- Serve chilled or over ice cubes
- Add lemonade or tonic water to juice–style drinks
- Add milk to dilute the milk-based supplement
- Add ice cream to milk–based drinks
- Freeze and eat as an ice–cream/sorbet/ice lolly
- Remove from the bottle and gently warm in a microwave (do not allow to boil)

If, after following this advice in this leaflet you are continuing to lose weight, or if there is no improvement with your appetite or diet, please contact your GP for further advice or help.

When your appetite returns, and your weight is right for you, please ask your dietitian, GP or practice nurse for information about healthy eating.

Additional tips to help improve appetite

- Larger portions of food can put you off eating altogether; you can always go back for a second helping
- Take time to relax between meals or courses
- Eat slowly and chew your food well
- If food tastes differently to you, add herbs and spices to increase flavour
- If you are feeling nauseous, keep away from cooking smells, opt for colder foods or ready meals which produce less cooking smells
- Dry foods, e.g. toast, crackers or plain biscuits, may help prevent nausea
- Try to always have something at meal times, and avoid missing meals
- Enjoy meals with friends or family – eating socially can sometimes help you to eat more or more regularly if you are able to
- Regular exercise where possible can help increase your appetite and improve your strength – start slowly and gradually increase the intensity

Please use the space below to write down any questions you may have and bring this with you to your next appointment.

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If you require this information in another format, such as a different language, large print, braille or audio version please ask a member of staff or email **patientexperience@uhb.nhs.uk**.

Nutrition and Dietetics

Queen Elizabeth Hospital Birmingham
Mindelsohn Way, Edgbaston
Birmingham, B15 2GW
Telephone: 0121 371 2000
