NHS
Suffolk and
North East Essex

Food enrichment ideas for people with diabetes

Hints and tips if you have lost your appetite or would like to increase or maintain your weight.

Sometimes we do not feel like eating. If you are unwell, you may have lost your appetite or unintentionally lost some weight. We know that a healthy diet for diabetes is low in fat and sugar and high in fibre. If you are unwell, it is difficult to follow these guidelines and still get the calories and protein you need.

You may need to increase your calories and protein to meet your nutritional requirements. Calories provide you with energy for your body and help prevent weight loss, while protein is important for growth, tissue repair, and muscle strength.

Eating different types and amounts of foods may lead to a change in your blood glucose levels. In the short-term, a small rise in your blood glucose levels is not a problem, but the following advice may help minimise this effect.

If you monitor your blood glucose levels at home and notice that the levels are consistently too high or too low, contact your GP or diabetes team for advice. If you don't monitor at home, your healthcare team can monitor your HbA1c (average blood glucose) to see how this is affected.

Please ensure you seek advice from your diabetes team before making dietary changes as your medication regime may need a review. This leaflet may not be suitable if you are on a texture modified diet.

Eat little and often: You may find it easier to eat four to six snack-size meals during the day

Nourishing drinks: Choose these in-between meals. Use whole milk to increase your calorie and protein intake and use when making Ovaltine® / Horlicks® / Bournvita® / Milo® / No added sugar Nesquik® or Crusha®

Fortified milk: Add 4 tablespoons of dried skimmed milk powder to one pint of whole milk to make fortified milk. Use in drinks, low sugar milky puddings, sugar free milk jellies, cereal, porridge, mashed potato, and white sauces

Other drinks: Choose latte/cappuccino/flat white coffees OR include fresh fruit juice or smoothies – only have one small glass (100ml) a day with a meal

Soups: Choose 'cream of' versions, add cheese, cream, or skimmed milk

Desserts: Choose cold ready-made desserts such as yoghurt, custard, rice pudding, fruit fool, ice cream (1-2 scoops only), fruit pie/crumble made with sweetener

Check the label and aim for less than 10g sugar per 100g. Stir 1-2 tablespoons milk powder OR 1-2 teaspoons cream to increase the calories.

Snacks: Choose one or two savoury or sweet snacks between your meals

Savoury: Cheese scone with butter, cheese (cubes/slices/straws), small pack of crisps or nuts, bread sticks with houmous, cheese and crackers, bite-size sausage rolls, pork pies, scotch eggs or cocktail sausages, one slice sandwich, one x toast or crumpet, English muffin, peanut butter, nut butter, boiled egg.

Sweet: Fruit, biscuits (1-2), scone – fruit or plain with reduced sugar jam/butter or cream, fruit teacakes, hot cross bun, small plain cake

Make high calorie choices: Whole milk, full fat cheese, full fat yoghurt, double cream, and evaporated milk

Make high protein choices: Meat, fish, beans and lentils, egg, yoghurt, nuts

Sandwich filling or toast toppings: Meat or fish paste, pate, scrambled egg or omelette, egg/tuna mayonnaise, fish tinned in oil, corned beef, baked beans, cheese/cheese spread, peanut/nut butter, houmous, tahini, guacamole/avocado, salsa, vegan cheese/dairy alternatives

Try adding any of the following high calorie/protein items into your foods:

Cream/condensed milk mixed into cereal, porridge, soup, yoghurt, rice pudding, mashed potato, milky drinks, or with fruit or cake

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Butter: Add into potatoes, mash, and vegetables

Olive oil/mayo/dressing: Add to salad, vegetables, mashed potato, sandwiches

Cheese/cream cheese: Add to pasta, main meals, soup, mashed potato, sandwiches, baked beans

Peanut butter/nut butter/nuts/seeds: Add to cereals, porridge, yoghurt, rice pudding, sandwiches, toast, low sugar smoothies

Other ideas:

Sharp-tasting foods are refreshing. Try fresh fruit/no added sugar lemon squash.

Cold foods are often more appetising than hot foods as they do not have such a strong smell. They can be just as nutritious.

Make the most of good days or find the best time of day when your appetite is at its best to have the meals/snacks suggested. Try to eat something small at each meal/snack time.

If you are struggling with food preparation, consider fresh or frozen ready-meals or meal home delivery services such as Oakhouse or Wiltshire Farm Foods or Meals on Wheels. If you do feel like cooking, make extra and freeze a portion for when you are not so inclined.

Store cupboard ideas:

Here are some more ideas for your cupboard and for some quick meals:

Tinned meats: Minced beef, corned beef, chicken in white sauce

Tinned macaroni cheese, spaghetti, spaghetti Bolognese. Tinned fish – tuna (use with plenty of mayonnaise), mackerel, pilchards, sardines on toast, boil-in-the-bag fish

Baked beans

Eggs – poached, scrambled, omelette with filling (e.g. ham and cheese)

Tinned or packet soups (with fortified milk or add grated cheese – eat with bread and butter)

Breakfast cereals, porridge with fortified milk

Tinned fruit (drain the natural juice) – have with cream/custard/evaporated milk, long-life double cream

Milk – dried, evaporated or long-life,

Tinned reduced-sugar milk puddings, instant whip (make up with fortified milk) ready-made sugar-free custard

Instant potato mixes

Packet savoury rice with chopped meat, chicken or ham

Nutritional supplement drinks such as Complan®/Meritene® which are available in pharmacies, large supermarkets, and online in a range of different flavours, both savoury and sweet. Split into smaller amounts and sip slowly.

If you continue to have concerns about your appetite or weight loss, please speak to your GP.

Fortified Milkshake/Hot Chocolate recipe:

Ingredients: (makes 1 portion)

⅓ pint/180ml cold or hot full fat milk

2 generous tablespoons/30g skimmed milk powder

4 heaped teaspoons/20g vitamin fortified milkshake powder (e.g. Asda Milkshake Mix, Lidl Choco Drink, Morrisons Milkshake Mix, Tesco Milkshake Mix or Nesquik®)

Directions: Mix skimmed milk powder and milkshake powder together in a glass. Gradually mix in cold or hot milk and stir well.

1 portion = 220ml. Serve 2 portions per day.

Fortified Ovaltine® or Horlicks®

Ingredients: (makes 1 portion)

⅓ pint/180ml hot full fat milk

2 generous tablespoons/30g skimmed milk powder

5 heaped teaspoons/25g Ovaltine® Original.

Add milk powder or Horlicks® Malted Food Drink powder. Mix skimmed milk powder and Ovaltine® or Horlicks® powder. Gradually mix in hot milk and stir well.

1 portion = 220ml Serve 2 portions per day

The above recipes provide 295-319kcal and 17g-19.3g proteins.

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