NHS
Suffolk and
North East Essex

Food Fortification Advice

If you have lost your appetite or lost some weight

Sometimes we do not feel like eating. You may need to increase your calories and protein to prevent further weight loss or to maintain your weight. Calories provide you with energy for your body and help to prevent weight loss, while protein is important for growth, tissue repair, and muscle strength.

If you have diabetes, please request our diabetes food fortification leaflet instead. This leaflet may not be suitable if you're 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 - whole milk, fresh fruit juice or smoothies, cup soups (preferably creamy), Horlicks/Ovaltine/hot chocolate/Bournvita/Crusha, over-the-counter protein drinks (avoid low-fat) made with whole milk, over-the-counter protein waters, add collagen* protein powders to drinks (as per manufacturer instructions)
*not suitable for vegans/vegetarians

Sweet snacks - biscuits, toast/crumpets with butter, chocolate, small cake, cold ready-made desserts (crème caramel, yoghurt, custard, rice pudding), malt loaf, scones, mini muffins

Savoury snacks - cubes of cheese, small packs of crisps/nuts, cheese and biscuits, bite-size sausage rolls/pork pies/scotch eggs or cocktail sausages, small sandwiches, breakfast cereals

Make high calorie choices - full fat milk, full fat cheese, full fat yoghurt, double cream and condensed milk

Make high protein choices - meat, fish, beans, lentils, eggs, cheese, milk, 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, hummus, tahini, jam, guacamole/avocado, chocolate spread, salsa, vegan cheese/dairy alternatives

Fortify food and drink - add four tablespoons of dried skimmed milk powder or protein powder (as per manufacturer instructions) to one pint of whole milk to make fortified milk. Use in drinks, on cereal, in mashed potato, as part of desserts and white sauces.

Make high-calorie and protein additions to snacks and meals - this includes cream (especially double cream), condensed milk, full fat butter or spread, olive oil, grated cheese or cream cheese, full fat mayonnaise or salad dressings, milk powder, sugar, honey, jam or syrup, peanut/nut butter, nuts and seeds, ground almonds, dried fruit

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

Cream/condensed milk – to cereal, porridge, soup, yoghurt, rice pudding, mash potato, milky drinks, fruit, cake

Milk powder – to cereal, porridge, soup, yoghurt, rice pudding, milky drinks

Butter – to soups, mashed potato, vegetables

Olive oil/mayo/dressing – to salads, vegetables, mashed potato, sandwiches

Cheese/cream cheese – to soup, mashed potato, sandwiches

Sugar/honey/jam/syrup – to cereals, porridge, yoghurt, rice pudding, milky drinks

Peanut butter/nut butter/nuts/seeds - to cereals, porridge, yoghurt, rice pudding, sandwiches, toast, smoothies

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Other ideas to try

Sharp-tasting foods are refreshing. Try fresh fruit, fruit juice, lemon squash, boiled sweets

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 by treating yourself to your favourite foods. Try to eat something small at each meal/snack time

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

Store cupboard advice - here are some more ideas for your cupboard and for some quick meals:

Tinned meats, such as 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 on toast with grated cheese or poached egg

Eggs – poached, scrambled, omelette with filling

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

Cheese – cheese on toast/cheese spread on toast etc.

Breakfast cereals, porridge – eat at any time with fortified milk and fruit

Dried fruit – can be added to puddings or eaten as snacks

Tinned fruit in syrup

Milk – dried, evaporated, condensed or long life

Tinned milk puddings, sponge puddings, crème caramels, instant whip made with fortified milk

Ready-made custard

Long life double cream

Instant potato mixes

Savoury rice with chopped meat, chicken, ham etc.

Over the counter nutritional supplement drinks –such as Complan, Meritene, or Ensure Nutrivigor, which are available in pharmacies and large supermarkets in a range of flavours, both savoury and sweet. You can also consider Huel or Y Food shakes.

Over the counter multivitamin and minerals – consider if you are not managing a balanced diet. Speak to your GP or pharmacist first if there may be contra-indications with your prescribed medications.

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

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