

Nourishing Diet

Information for people who have a reduced appetite and/or who maybe at risk of malnutrition.

A balanced diet is essential for health and wellbeing. If you have a poor appetite, low body weight and/or unintentional weight loss, you may be at risk of malnutrition. Malnutrition may occur when you do not get the correct amount of nutrients, which your body needs. During periods of illness, disease and recovery, your body may require more nutrients than it normally does.

Malnutrition can have the following consequences:

- increased risk of illness and infection
- slower wound healing
- increased risk of falls
- low mood
- reduced energy levels
- reduced muscle strength
- reduced quality of life
- reduced independence and ability to carry out daily activities

Treating malnutrition

Including nutrient dense foods and nourishing drinks can help to increase energy intake without making portions too big to manage. Protein, energy (calories), vitamins and minerals are all important for people who are malnourished.

General tips for eating well:

- Eat 2 - 3 portions of high protein foods every day such as eggs, meat, fish, beans, pulses, and nuts.
- Eat/drink 2 - 3 portions of calcium containing foods every day such as full fat milk, yoghurt, cheese or fortified dairy free alternatives.
- Include starchy food at each meal e.g., potatoes, pasta, rice, bread, or cereals.
- Eat some fruit and vegetables every day (fresh, frozen, tinned, dried, or juiced).
- Have at least 6 - 8 glasses/mugs of fluid every day, choosing drinks that contain some nutrition where possible. For example, drinks made with full fat milk e.g., malted drinks, hot chocolate, smoothies, and shakes can provide energy, protein and vitamins and minerals. All these drinks contribute towards your daily fluid intake.

If you have any health conditions which have previously required you to limit fat and sugar in your diet, e.g., diabetes or high cholesterol, you should discuss whether you still need to limit these with a health professional.



The following tips will help you to increase the amount of energy and protein you eat each day:

- Eat little and often, e.g., 5 - 6 smaller meals/plates each day.
- Try to include at least 500ml of fortified milk each day. To make fortified milk add 4 heaped tablespoons of dried milk powder (e.g., Marvel, Nestle Nido or supermarket own brand) to one pint (568ml) of whole full fat milk. Fortified milk can be used in tea/coffee, cereals, sauces, puddings and for nourishing drinks.
- Avoid low fat and/or diet versions of foods.

Add food toppers to your meals

Add 1- 2 food toppers to each of your main meals and desserts:



Food topper	Calories (Kcal)	Protein (g)	Ideas to fortify your meals
1 tablespoon (15ml) olive or nut oil	135	0	Add to soups, bread, toast, and potatoes. Mix with balsamic vinegar as a dip for bread.
1 tablespoon (15g) butter	100	0	Add to bread, vegetables, and potatoes
30g (match box size) cheese	125	7.6	Add to crackers, bread, potatoes, and soups
1 heaped tablespoon (15g) of ground/chopped almonds or hazelnuts	92	3.2	Add to rice puddings, yoghurts, desserts, porridge or roasted and stir fried vegetables
1 teaspoon (15g) creamed coconut	100	0.9	
1 tablespoon (15ml) of double cream/UHT cream	75/50	0.3	
1 tablespoon (15g) of peanut, cashew or almond butter	91	3.4	Add to pasta and stir fried vegetables. Mix with yoghurt to make a dressing. Add to oil and lemon juice as a marinade for meat, fish, or tofu.
1 rounded tablespoon 30g cream cheese	68	1.6	Add to pasta dishes, crackers, bread, and jacket potato fillings
1 scoop ice cream	95	1.5	Add to desserts and fruit
50g (1/8 th tin) evaporated milk	80	3.8	
50g condensed milk	163	3.5	
1 heaped teaspoon (17g) honey	50	0	
1 tablespoon (15g) of black strap molasses	42	0.6	Add to savoury dishes and sauces
1 heaped tablespoon dried milk powder	55	5.5	Add to soups, casseroles, porridge, cereals, milk, and yoghurts



Include high-energy snacks between meals

Aim to include two to three high-energy snacks each day each containing at least 150 kcal calories. Examples include:



Sweet	Savoury
Two slices of fruited malt loaf e.g., 1/4 of Soreen loaf* (add butter/full fat spread for extra energy)	Large handful of nuts and seeds*
1 pot (120g) of thick and creamy/high protein yoghurt* or coconut yoghurt	30g (matchbox size) cheese* with two crackers or digestive biscuits*
1 crème caramel*, rice pudding* or custard pot* with a heaped teaspoon of jam or teaspoon of double cream	50g (quarter of a pot) full fat dip e.g., hummus*, guacamole, mayonnaise, or cheese dip*. Served with pitta bread, breadsticks, crisps, or crackers
2-3 bite sized flapjacks or mini cakes	2-3 falafel*, bhaji*, samosas* or sausage rolls*
1 toasted teacake with butter*	1 slice of bread/toast or crumpet with 1 tablespoon of peanut butter*
1 small bowl (approx. 125g) of trifle*	1 crumpet, scone or ½ bagel with butter
½ tin (100g) fruit with 1-2 tablespoons of cream, condensed milk* or evaporated milk*	1 mini pork pie or slice of quiche*
1 bowl of porridge or cereal made with fortified milk* or a cereal bar*	½ scotch egg*
1 large handful (approx. 50g) of dried fruit	1 slice of toast with butter and peanut butter*

Foods marked with a * contain a source of protein

Include nourishing drinks

Include at least **two** nourishing drinks each day, ideally made using fortified whole milk (see advice above). Examples, include:

- A glass of fortified milk with honey
- Hot chocolate made with fortified milk and extra double cream
- Horlicks, Ovaltine/malted milk or Nesquik made with fortified milk
- Fruit smoothie made with fortified milk or yoghurt



See the separate Nourishing Recipes leaflet for recipes if you wish to make your own nourishing drinks (also known as homemade supplements).

Alternatively, nourishing drinks are available to buy on-line and at some supermarkets and health food shops. Brands include Complan, Aymes Retail, Mertitene Energis (soups or shakes) and Nurishment Original. Other nourishing high energy/high protein drinks available from most supermarkets and food shops including Weetabix on the go protein breakfast drink, Up & Go breakfast drink and Huel ready to drink.



Example Meal Plan

Here is an example of a food diary with food that has not been fortified compared to food that has been fortified using simple measures – making small changes have increased the total number of calories and protein at the end of the day:

Meal	Standard	Fortified
Breakfast	Porridge made with water Cup of coffee	Porridge made with fortified milk and a handful of raisins or spoonful of jam or honey. Cup of milky coffee made with fortified milk
Mid-morning	Cup of tea	Cup of tea made with fortified milk and two shortbread biscuits
Lunch	Small tin of baked beans on one slice of dry toast	Small tin of baked beans on one slice of toast with butter thickly spread and grated cheddar cheese
Mid-afternoon	Cup of coffee made with semi-skimmed milk	Cup of milky coffee made with fortified milk
Evening meal	Oven baked cod fillet with a few boiled new potatoes and peas	Cod fillet fried in vegetable oil, mashed potato made with fortified milk and grated cheese, peas with a knob of butter
Supper	Cup of tea	Horlicks made with fortified milk with two squares of chocolate
Totals	500kcal and 35g protein	1680kcal and 84g protein

Ready meals and home delivery

If you are struggling to prepare or cook meals, you may wish to consider ready meals. Most supermarkets stock a range of ready meals.

Alternatively on-line companies, for example, Wiltshire Farm Foods, Oakhouse Foods, COOK Foods and Parsley Box can deliver a range of ready meals to your door.



Further Information and Support

Visit our 'Malnutrition' section on our website

www.patientwebinars.co.uk for webinars and further information, including additional nourishing drinks and recipes.



Additionally, if you have concerns about your nutritional intake and/or unintentional weight loss and feel you need further support then ask your GP to refer you to a dietitian for advice.



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Advice for patients

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