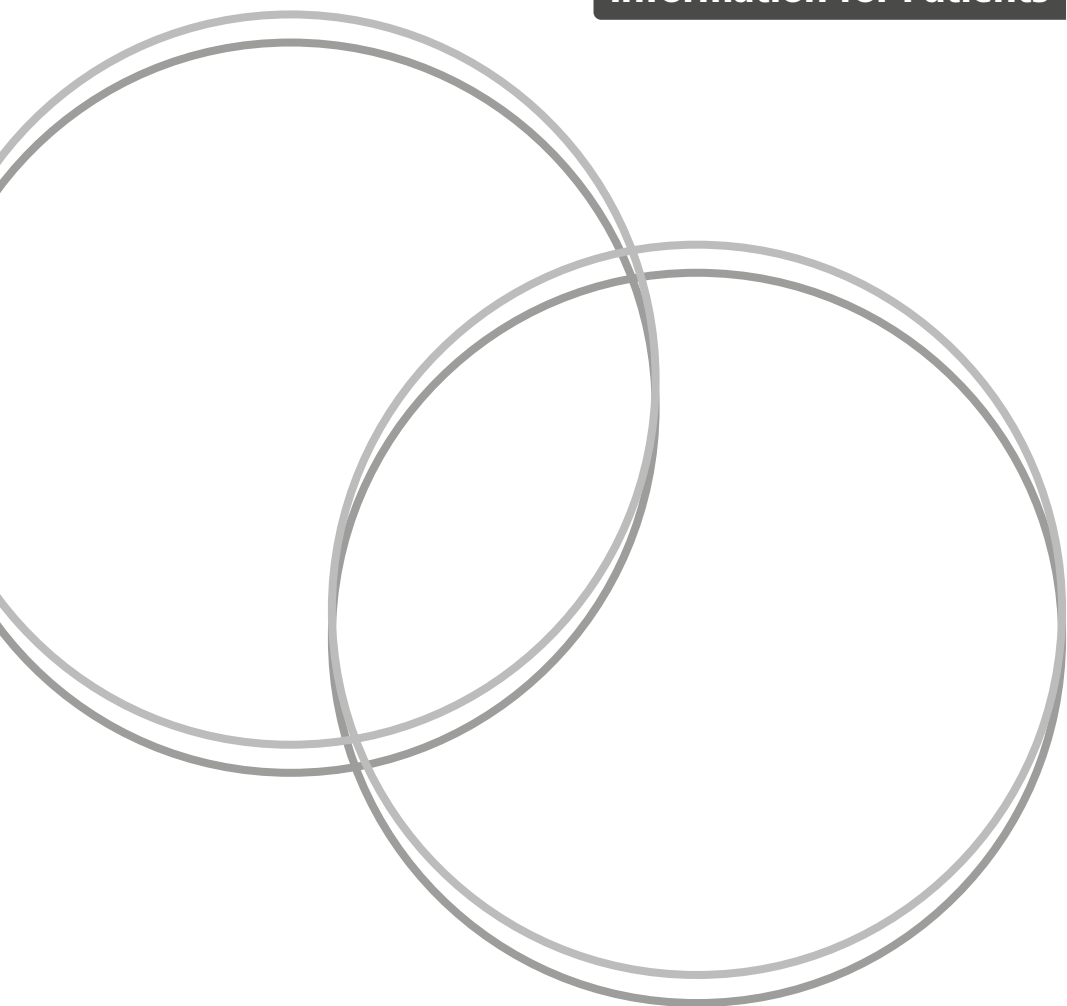




Oxford University Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Nutrition Support: Improving your protein and energy intake

Information for Patients



If you are unwell or in hospital, you may struggle to eat and drink enough. This can lead to unintentional weight loss and may slow your recovery.

When you are unwell or recovering from illness, your body needs more energy and protein, even if you are less active. Without enough nutrition, your body will start to break down muscle in order to provide an alternative energy source. As a result, your muscles become weaker. You may find you lose your appetite and feel unable to eat as much food as usual. This may be due to a number of different reasons, including the illness itself, medications and other treatments or side-effects of treatments.

Even though you may not feel hungry, it is still extremely important to give your body the nourishment it needs to maintain your weight and support your recovery. Sometimes you may find that you need to increase your food intake even if your appetite is good and you are eating well. At these times, it is useful to think of food as a fuel for your body or as a medicine as part of your treatment.

Why is eating and drinking so important?

- To prevent weight loss
- To prevent loss of muscle tissue
- To improve energy levels
- To reduce the risk of getting an infection
- To reduce the risk of developing pressure injuries (bed sores)
- To help wound healing and recovery
- To reduce the length of time in hospital
- To improve quality of life

What if I am following a special diet?

If you have been advised to follow a special diet by your Dietitian or Doctor then it is important to ask if this advice is still appropriate. You may have Diabetes or be following a Healthy Heart diet, so please speak with your Dietitian about using the information in this booklet alongside or to replace previous advice.

If you have been advised to follow a modified texture diet e.g. puree (level 4), minced and moist (level 5) or easy to chew, or if you have difficulties swallowing, it is important that you continue to follow the guidance on appropriate food textures. Please remember if you been recommended modified fluids (Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, Level 4) it is vital to thicken all fluids to the recommended consistency. You can still use some of the information in this booklet but you will need to modify the texture and modify drinks/liquids e.g. gravy/milk/custard/supplements etc. Please ask your Dietitian/Speech and Language Therapist for advice on thickening supplements, and always seek advice if you are unsure.

Helpful Hints

- Have small meals and snacks regularly across the day, rather than waiting until you feel hungry
- Avoid missing meals, as this may make you feel more unwell
- Eat your favourite foods at any time of the day e.g. breakfast foods at lunchtime
- Enjoy meals with family and friends where possible
- Try to present your food in an attractive way, to make it more appetising
- Try a variety of new foods and experiment with different colours, flavours, smells and textures to help improve your interest in food
- Serve food on a smaller plate, as a large full plate can often be overwhelming
- Choose foods which are high in protein and energy (see overleaf)
- Fortify or add extra calories and protein to your food where possible (see overleaf)
- Try drinking fluids in between your meals, as having fluids at the same time as your meal may fill you up
- Choose nourishing fluids instead of water, low sugar squash and black tea/coffee e.g. milk, milky tea/coffee, hot chocolate, Horlicks™, smoothies, fruit juice
- If you don't feel like eating, try having a drink which is high in energy and protein e.g. milk based drinks like milkshakes and smoothies
- Make sure you have a range of ready-prepared meals and snacks available for times when you are feeling too tired or unwell to cook e.g. soups, frozen meals, cheese, crackers, dips, nuts. Frozen and canned foods are convenient and can be just as nutritious as fresh foods

- Prepare larger quantities of meals in advance e.g. casseroles, soups, baked desserts and freeze individual servings
- Gentle physical activity and fresh air can stimulate your appetite. Try taking a short walk or go outside before eating
- If you feel that your sense of taste has changed, use herbs, spices and seasoning to flavour food. Opt for strong or sharp flavours which are more distinct e.g. pickle/chutney, extra mature cheese, fresh fruit/juice
- Make sure that your mouth feels fresh and clean before eating. Moisten your mouth by drinking fluids regularly. Ice cubes and ice lollies may also be helpful
- Softer foods with extra sauce or gravy, which require less chewing, are easier to eat, especially if your mouth is dry
- If you are feeling sick, smaller, more frequent meals and snacks may be easier to manage. Avoid fatty or fried foods. Some people may also find the following useful: food or drink containing ginger, peppermint tea, sipping a fizzy drink.

Protein

Protein forms the main structure of all the cells in the body, including muscle. It is also essential for growth, repair, and providing energy. You should include a high protein food with every meal and snack. These can include:

- Meat (e.g. chicken, turkey, beef, pork, lamb)
- Fish (e.g. cod, haddock, salmon, mackerel, sardines)
- Eggs
- Dairy (e.g. milk, cheese, cottage cheese, yoghurt, custard)

Please see overleaf for further information on the protein content of different milks.

- Nuts and seeds (e.g. peanut, cashews, almonds, walnuts, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, nut butters)
- Meat alternatives (Quorn, tofu, soya products)
- Beans, lentils and pulses.

Energy

The body needs energy (calories) to function normally. You need to provide your body with energy to help your recovery. High energy foods include:

- Butter, margarine and oils
- Salad dressing, mayonnaise, salad cream, dips and sauces
- Cream and ice-cream
- Dried fruit
- Nuts and seeds
- Chocolate and sweets
- Crisps
- Sugar, honey and jam
- Pastry products, cakes and puddings
- Soft drink, cordial and juice.

Small Meal and Snack Ideas

You may find it easier to have smaller meals with extra snacks in between rather than three larger meals. Try to eat frequently throughout the day e.g. every 2-3 hours. Below are some suggested ideas which may also be helpful if you are finding main meals difficult to manage.

Sweet snacks:

- Milky puddings (e.g. custard, rice pudding, sago pudding)
- Thick & creamy or Greek yoghurt, corner yoghurts, full fat yoghurts
- Small pots of fromage frais
- Chocolate desserts, trifles, cheesecake
- Fruit fools, mousses, instant whips, crème caramel
- Ice-creams, choc ices, frozen yoghurts
- Breakfast cereal with full cream milk and sugar
- Dried fruit (e.g. raisins, cranberries, banana chips, papaya, mango) and nuts
- Bite sized snacks (e.g. flapjacks, mini rolls, millionaires shortbread)
- Croissants (plain or filled)
- Sweet biscuits (e.g. chocolate, cream filled)
- Mini cakes (e.g. Bakewell tarts, jam and custard, lemon and angel slices)
- Muffins
- Cereal or chocolate bars
- Fruit with peanut butter or chocolate spreads
- Eggy bread with a sweet or savoury topping.

Savoury snacks:

- Sandwiches with a variety of fillings (please see below)
- Toast, crumpets or English muffins with a variety of toppings (please see below)
- Cheese scones
- Quiche
- Eggs, including omelette, frittata, boiled eggs
- Savoury pastries (e.g. mini sausages rolls, scotch eggs, pork pies)
- Mini Indian or Chinese party food (e.g. samosas, onion bhajis, spring rolls)
- Falafel with houmous or yoghurt
- Breadsticks, crisps or pitta bread with dips (e.g. houmous, sour cream, tzatziki)
- Crisps, pretzels or rice cakes
- Cheese and crackers
- Savoury biscuits (e.g. mini cheddars™, TUC sandwich biscuits™, Ryvita™, oat cakes)
- Avocado
- Nuts and seeds
- Vegetable sticks with peanut butter, houmous or dips.

If you feel unable to manage a main meal, a good alternative could be a sandwich or toast. Below are some ideas for high calorie, high protein toppings and fillings.

Toast toppings:

Choose different types of bread or bread products e.g. crumpets and muffins.

- Poached or scrambled egg with grated cheese
- Sardines or pilchards in tomato sauce
- Tinned salmon or tuna with mayonnaise
- Smoked salmon and cream cheese
- Smoked mackerel or kippers
- Baked beans with grated cheese
- Cottage cheese
- Avocado
- Grated cheese mixed with plain yoghurt and pineapple chunks
- Grilled bacon, mushrooms and tomatoes
- Tinned ravioli, macaroni cheese or spaghetti with grated cheese
- Sweet spreads (e.g. butter/margarine and jam, honey, marmalade, lemon curd, chocolate spread)
- Nut spreads (e.g. peanut butter)
- Homemade pizza: spread a slice of bread with tomato puree or ketchup, then top with grated cheese, ham and peppers and grill until bubbling.

Sandwich fillings:

- Meat (e.g. ham, bacon, cooked chicken, salami, corned beef, pate, sausage)
- Fish (e.g. tinned tuna, salmon, smoked mackerel, sardines, fish fingers)
- Cheese (e.g. hard cheese, cream cheese)
- Egg (e.g. boiled, egg mayonnaise)
- Houmous
- Avocado
- Sauces (e.g. mayonnaise, salad cream, pickle, chutney).

Food Fortification

Many foods can be fortified to be more nourishing and provide extra calories and protein without you having to increase your portion size. This will help if you are finding large meals overwhelming. Some suggestions include:

- Use fortified milk in substitution for your normal milk. To one pint of full fat milk add four tablespoons of milk powder, for example Marvel™, Five Pints™ or supermarket own brand
- Add cheese on top of soups, scrambled egg or vegetable sauces (e.g. grated cheddar or parmesan, crumbled Gruyere, Red Leicester or feta or a spoonful of full fat soft cheese)
- Add tinned beans, pulses, lentils to fresh or tinned soups or casseroles
- Add a handful of extra pasta, rice, croutons or meat, chicken or tofu to soups or casseroles
- Add milk, butter or grated cheese to mashed, boiled or jacket potatoes
- Add olive oil, dressings, salad cream or mayonnaise to salads and sandwiches
- Fry meat and vegetables in oil before serving
- Serve fruit puddings with full fat yoghurt, cream, crème fraiche, custard or ice-cream
- Try topping milky puddings such as yoghurt or ice-cream with ground nuts, a sprinkle of seeds or a spoonful of muesli or granola
- Add full fat yoghurt, cream, crème fraiche, sugar, honey, nuts, seeds to breakfast cereal or porridge.

What about healthier options?

If you are concerned about eating large amounts of high sugar and high fat foods listed in this booklet, you may wish to choose some of the following alternatives. These foods are still high in protein and energy, but contain less saturated fat, sugar and salt.

- Low or reduced fat dairy (e.g. milk, cottage cheese, low fat or fat-free yoghurt)
- Eggs (poached, scrambled or boiled)
- Lean meats (e.g. skinless chicken, turkey)
- Trim all visible fat from red meats
- Oily fish provide a great source of protein and energy and are good for your heart. Tinned or fresh salmon, sardines or mackerel can be eaten hot or cold. Try to eat at least one portion per week
- Try to choose less pastry items or sweet biscuits. Instead choose flapjacks, fruit cakes or oatcakes and crackers with protein toppings
- Use unsalted nuts and seeds as a snack or add ground nuts to yoghurt, desserts, cereal or soup
- Unsaturated oils and spreads (e.g. olive or rapeseed, rice bran or sunflower) can be used in place of animal fats such as butter or lard
- Salt-reduced margarine or olive oil spread
- Nut spreads (e.g. peanut, almond or cashew butter). Try to use sugar-free varieties
- Reduced fat and sugar salad dressings, salad cream or mayonnaise

- Use avocado as a spread or toast topping or sliced in a salad or with vegetables
- Lentils, beans and pulses are a good protein source and will help to reduce cholesterol levels. These can be added to soups and casseroles to boost protein
- Vegetables can still be served as part of a high energy and protein diet. Try to serve with a sauce or accompaniment (e.g. with a cheese or white sauce or rich gravy).

Diabetes

If you have diabetes and you normally check your blood sugar levels, you should continue to do this regularly. Contact your Practice Nurse or Diabetes Nurse if you have trouble keeping your results within normal limits.

What about dairy-free milks?

Some people are unable to drink cow's milk for either health reasons or as a personal preference. There are a wide variety of dairy-free milks available in the supermarkets. If you do normally drink dairy-free milk, try to choose one which is higher in protein.

Milk Type	Average Energy (Kcal) per 100ml	Average Protein (g) per 100ml
Whole cow's milk	66	3.3
Semi-skimmed cow's milk	46	3.4
Skimmed cow's milk	37	3.6
Lacto-free whole cow's milk	57	3.4
Lacto-free semi-skimmed cow's milk	40	3.6
Whole Goats milk	61	2.8
Soya milk (unsweetened)	34	3.4
Soya milk (sweetened)	44	3.4
Rice milk	47	0.1
Oat milk	45	0.3
Almond milk	24	0.5
Coconut milk	20	0.1

Nutritional Supplements

You may find it difficult to maintain or gain weight with food alone.

Oral nutritional supplements are high energy, high protein enriched drinks, which are available in many different forms. Meritene™, Complan™ and Aymes Retail™ are powder-based drinks which can be made up with full fat milk. They are available at local pharmacies and supermarkets, and therefore do not require a GP prescription. It is important to take these between meals, rather than as a meal replacement.

Some people may continue to lose weight despite following the advice in this booklet and the use of over-the-counter supplement drinks. If this is the case, you should speak to your Consultant or GP about a referral to a Dietitian.

My Nutrition Plan

My current energy and protein intake is:

Adequate

Inadequate

My current nutritional state is:

Well nourished

Well nourished, but at risk of malnutrition

Malnourished

What do I need to do to improve my nutrition?

-
-
-
-

Additional points:

Contact details of my Dietitian:

Name: _____

Number: _____

Some people like to monitor their weight. If this is the case, you may find the table below is helpful:

Date	Weight

Further information

If you would like an interpreter, please speak to the department where you are being seen.

Please also tell them if you would like this information in another format, such as:

- Easy Read
- large print
- braille
- audio
- electronic
- another language.

We have tried to make the information in this leaflet meet your needs. If it does not meet your individual needs or situation, please speak to your healthcare team. They are happy to help.

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