

A guide to eating well if you have a small appetite for clients in a community setting or on a community caseload

If you are eating less or have lost weight without planning to, simple changes to your meals and snacks may make a difference. You may be recommended foods that you would think are unhealthy. This is the recommended diet until your appetite improves.

Why do you need to eat well?

- If you have a poor appetite, you may have lost weight or be at risk of losing weight
- Eating too little may also affect your energy levels
- Lack of protein, minerals and vitamins may make you more prone to illness or delay the healing process
- It is important that you eat a balanced diet to provide all the necessary nutrients. These can be provided by simple meals and snacks.

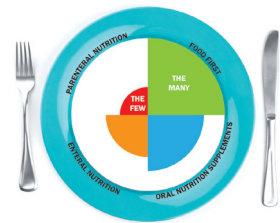


Helpful Hints

- Aim for 3 small meals and 2 to 3 snacks a day if your appetite is poor
- Take drinks after your meal, not before or during as this can fill you up
- Drinks, snacks and meals can be fortified to make them more nutritious
- Smoking can reduce your appetite - try to cut down or stop smoking
- Eating breakfast may help you eat better for the rest of the day
- Add variety to your diet wherever possible to make meals more interesting
- Convenience foods can be useful if you find cooking difficult or tiring.



This dietary advice sheet gives some general information to help you make changes to your diet. If your appetite does not improve or you lose more weight or you find making these changes difficult, please discuss with your doctor.



Food Groups

PROTEIN FOODS

- Aim to have 2 portions of protein a day and choose from the following foods:

Meat, chicken and fish

- Include at least 75-100g (3-4oz) of meat, chicken or fish if you have a cooked meal
- Try convenience foods such as lasagne, fish in sauce or shepherd's pie
- For a snack meal include smaller portions of meat or fish in a sandwich or on toast e.g. tinned mackerel on toast or chicken sandwich.

Cheese and Eggs

- Grated cheese can be added into scrambled eggs, mashed potatoes, sprinkled onto a bowl of soup or beans on toast
- For a snack meal try cheese on toast or cheese or egg sandwiches. (1oz (30g) cheese or 1-2 eggs)
- Have a cheese or egg meal such as macaroni cheese, scrambled eggs, cauliflower cheese or an omelette
- Try making a cheese sauce to put with vegetables, fish or pasta.

Beans and Lentils

- Choose lentil or bean soups, or add tinned beans such as butter beans or kidney beans to casseroles or soups.

Nuts

- Snack on plain, salted, dry-roasted or chocolate covered nuts
- Add to foods such as casseroles, salads or desserts.

DAIRY FOODS

- Aim for at least 1 pint (568 ml) of milk per day or at least 3 portions of dairy foods.
1 portion is: 200 ml (1/3 pint) milk
150g (medium pot) of yoghurt
30g (1 oz) cheese
200g (1/2 can) of milky pudding
- Use whole milk if you are losing weight, or aim for 2-3 portions each day
- Avoid low fat, sugar free yoghurts. Choose thick and creamy varieties
- Include a milk-based dessert at meals e.g. custard, milk jelly, yoghurt, fruit fools and mousses.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

- Fruit and vegetables provide vitamins and minerals. Include small helpings with meals but don't fill up on these as they are low in protein and calories
- Frozen or tinned fruit and vegetables are just as nutritious as fresh
- Aim for at least one glass of pure fruit juice or squash fortified with vitamin C a day.

CARBOHYDRATE

- Carbohydrates are starchy foods e.g. potatoes, breakfast cereal, rice, pasta and bread. These are important as they provide fuel for the body and essential vitamins and minerals
- Wholegrain varieties provide fibre and help to prevent constipation but may be filling so avoid if appetite is small
- Have at least one portion at every meal: one serving is approximately 1 slice of bread, 1/2 cup of rice, 1/2 cup of pasta, 2 egg sized potatoes or a small bowl of cereal.



Fortifying your foods to increase calories

Calories come from protein foods, fats and oils, starchy foods (bread, potatoes, pasta, rice and breakfast cereals) and sugar. To increase your calorie intake make sure you do the following:

- Add lots of butter or margarine to your foods e.g.
 - Spread thickly on bread and crackers
 - Mash into potatoes or melt on top of vegetables
 - Stir into hot pasta and serve with meat or cheese sauce
 - Do not use “light” or low fat spread
- Frying foods can add extra calories
 - Roast potatoes and chips are high in calories and are a useful source of energy
- Use mayonnaise, salad cream and dressings generously
- Choose whole milk instead of skimmed or semi-skimmed milk
- Add cream to soups, sauces, desserts or porridge
- Grate cheese over scrambled egg, vegetables or potatoes.



‘Over the counter’ enriched drinks e.g. Complan or Build-Up can be used to increase calorie intake.

Fortified Milk

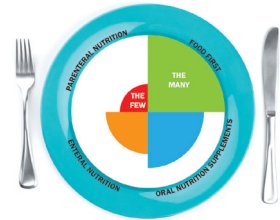
Fortify milk by adding skimmed milk powder e.g. Marvel, or supermarkets’ own brand skimmed milk powder. This increases the protein and calorie content.

Whisk 2-4 heaped tablespoons (50g/2oz) skimmed milk powder into 1 pint of whole milk.

This milk can then be used to:

- Make milky drinks such as hot chocolate, coffee, Ovaltine, Horlicks, or cocoa
- Make porridge
- Pour over cereal
- Make sauces e.g. white or cheese sauce
- Milkshakes (try adding fresh fruit and ice cream for a “thick shake”)
- Make into desserts e.g. custard, semolina, rice pudding etc.





Meal and snack ideas for small appetites

Breakfast

- Cereal e.g. Weetabix, Cornflakes, Ready Brek, Rice Krispies or Porridge with whole milk
- And/or toast with margarine/butter and jam, peanut butter, marmalade
- Baked beans or spaghetti on toast or bread
- Scrambled, boiled, fried or poached egg on bread or toast
- Glass of fresh orange juice / whole milk or piece of fruit with cream.



Light Meal

- Macaroni cheese with grated cheese and tomato
- Creamy soup with grated cheese / cream and a roll or sandwich
- Cheese, baked beans, peanut butter, tinned spaghetti or sardines on toast
- Jacket potato with butter or margarine, cheese and baked beans, tuna and mayonnaise or creamy mushroom sauce
- Cauliflower cheese with potatoes, or wheaten bread
- Sausage rolls, pasties, Scotch egg or meat pie with baked beans, bread or chips
- Sandwich made with margarine or soft butter, cheese and / or Mayonnaise and filling such as tinned fish, cold meat, cheese, prawns or boiled egg with salad
- Quiche and garlic bread.



Main Meal

- Chicken pie, potatoes and vegetables
- Sausages, baked beans and mashed potatoes
- Any ready meal
- Poached fish with potatoes and tinned/frozen vegetables
- Shepherd's pie / cottage pie / Irish stew.



Bed Time

- Hot milky drink e.g. Horlicks, Ovaltine, hot chocolate made with whole milk.





Meal and snack ideas for small appetites

Ideas for snacks and desserts

- Milky Desserts e.g. milk pudding, stewed fruit & custard, sponge & custard, fruit fool, fromage frais, semolina, egg custard, mousse, milk jelly, ice cream, rice pudding, custard, thick and creamy yoghurt e.g. Greek style yoghurt, trifle
- Soft fruit with cream or ice-cream
- Tray bakes, buns and pastries: chocolate éclairs, doughnuts, croissants
- Biscuits e.g. chocolate covered biscuits, shortbread, flapjacks, cookies
- Toasted crumpets / barmbrack / malt loaf/ scones / pancakes / crumpets topped with butter, jam, honey or cheese.

