

First line nutrition support dietary advice

For patients referred to the
Dietetic Telephone Clinic

You have been given this leaflet because it was highlighted during your outpatient attendance that you may be at risk of malnutrition. If you have lost your appetite, are losing weight or are underweight, it is important to make every mouthful count!

This patient guide has been given to:

Patient name: _____

By: _____

Papworth Hospital Outpatient Clinic Staff

Tips to improve appetite

- Try to continue to eat regularly as you need to eat to stimulate your appetite.
- Sometimes large meals can be off putting so try to eat 'little and often'.
- Aim to have three small meals per day as well as two to three snacks or milky drinks between meals.
- If you are too full to manage a dessert or pudding then have this as your between meal snack.
- Eating in the company of others can make meals more enjoyable.
- It is important to drink plenty of fluid but try to ensure these drinks are as nourishing as possible and avoid drinking large amounts of fluid before eating.
- If you are suffering with constipation contact your pharmacist or GP for advice on laxatives as ensuring regular bowel movement may help improve your appetite.

Ideas for nourishing snacks

- Dried fruits
- Nuts*
- Cheese and crackers*
- Milky puddings such as yoghurts or individual mousses, trifles or cheese cakes*
- Fruit cake or malt loaf with butter or margarine*
- Toasted crumpet or teacake with butter or margarine*
- Breakfast cereals with milk*

Ideas for nourishing drinks

- Aim to have at least one pint of milk per day. Full cream milk is best as it contains more calories but if you are unable to take this then use semi-skimmed milk.*
- Milk can be enriched with extra protein by adding dried skimmed milk powder (add 2-4 teaspoons to all milk drinks).*
- Use milk instead of water to make coffee, hot chocolate, cocoa, malted milk drinks (for example Ovaltine and Horlicks) and packet soups.*
- Milk shake powder and syrups can be used to make milk shakes.
- If you have a blender you can make milk shakes with fruit and ice cream instead.

Enriching your meals

If your appetite is very poor and you are able to eat only very small amounts you can enrich your foods and make them more nutritious without increasing the size of your meals.

- Try adding grated cheese, butter, margarine, cream, mayonnaise or milk powder to vegetables, potatoes, soups or sauces.*
- Try adding sugar, honey, syrup or jam to puddings or breakfast cereals.
- Try adding cream, full fat yoghurt, evaporated milk or milk powder to tinned fruits, breakfast cereals or custard.*

**These drinks, snacks and tips are suitable for diabetic patients. Monitor your blood sugar levels regularly and if they increase significantly contact your GP for further advice.*

Nutritional supplement drinks

You have been given a letter to take to your GP to get a prescription for nutritional supplement drinks.

- These are milkshake drinks with added vitamins and minerals.
- They are available in a variety of flavours.
- They should be taken between meals rather than instead of meals.
- You can add milk or ice-cream to the milk based supplements if you prefer.

If you do not like milky drinks or are intolerant to milk and dairy then please advise your GP as there are fruit juice based nutritional supplements available.

Referral to dietitian

You have been referred to our hospital dietitians. They will telephone you at the next Dietetic Telephone clinic which runs once a week. If you will not be available, or would like the dietitian to call you on an alternative number, please telephone the Nutrition and Dietetic department on 01480 364672. If you prefer you can email phn-tr.papworthdietitian@nhs.net

The dietitian will ask about the meals, food and drinks you are currently managing and check whether your GP is prescribing supplements, and if so whether you are able to take them. You may be given further dietary advice on the telephone and then follow this up in writing.

The dietitian may want to refer you to see a community dietitian but will discuss this with you first.

Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Papworth Everard, Cambridge, CB23 3RE

Tel: 01480 830541

Fax: 01480 831315

www.papworthhospital.nhs.uk

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Tel: 01480 364000

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