

Increasing calories and protein in your diet

A patient's guide

We all need to eat a balanced diet for health. When you are unwell and do not feel like eating as much as usual, you may lose weight.

It is very important that you continue to have a balanced diet but you also need extra protein and calories to prevent weight loss or to regain your weight.

When your appetite is poor, it is better to add foods which melt or dissolve on to your food or into your drinks, rather than to have to eat larger quantities of food. This leaflet will help you to do this.

You may feel that this energy-dense diet could potentially affect your cholesterol levels but it is important to consider the risk of being underweight versus including some of these foods in your diet. Please talk to your GP/dietitian if you are concerned.

If you need to increase your calorie intake whilst considering your cholesterol levels you may want to opt for foods that contain 'good fats' (unsaturated fats) e.g. unsalted nuts, olive/rapeseed oil, peanut butter, avocado and oily fish.

When to eat?

Make sure that you eat regularly. Small frequent meals or snacks every two or three hours will ensure you receive as much nutrition as you would having three large meals a day.

Foods high in calories

- Butter, margarine, oil and cream
- Sugar, honey, syrup and glucose
- Starchy foods such as bread, cereals and potatoes

Foods high in protein

- Meat, fish and chicken
- Full cream milk, evaporated milk, milk powder
- Cheese
- Eggs
- Full fat yogurts

Note

Fruit and vegetables are not high in calories or protein but are important to include for a balanced diet. Try to have 2-3 servings of fruit or 1 serving of fruit juice and 1-2 small servings of vegetables daily.

Add extra energy to your meals

Sugar and glucose

- Add sugar to breakfast cereals, hot and cold drinks and puddings
- Glucose can be used instead of, or as well as, sugar as it is not sweet
- Spread jam, marmalade, honey or syrup thickly on bread, toast or scones
- Add jam or honey/treacle to milk puddings
- Eat sweet foods such as biscuits, cakes and sweets
- Drink canned drinks and fruit squashes
- Do not drink low calorie varieties

Fatty food

- Spread butter or margarine thickly on toast and bread and add to vegetables and potatoes
- Do not use low fat spread
- Fry foods if possible, eat more chips and roast potatoes
- Toss pasta in oil, stir fry rice, vegetables etc
- Use mayonnaise or salad cream in sandwiches and salads
- Add cream to soups, sauces, milk puddings, fruit and porridge
- Sour cream can be used in casseroles and baked potatoes

High protein foods to add to your meal

Milk

- Try to use at least 1 pint of full cream milk daily
- Make up condensed and packet soups, porridge and jellies with full cream milk
- Choose milk puddings, milky drinks, milk shakes and add plenty of full cream milk to breakfast cereals
- Fortify your milk for extra protein by adding 4 tablespoons of milk powder to a pint of milk. Use this milk for all your drinks, in cooking and to make puddings and instant desserts

Cheese

- Choose full fat hard cheeses rather than low fat or cottage cheeses
- Keep grated cheese in the fridge to add to soups, sauces, mashed potato, omelettes, scrambled egg, tinned spaghetti, baked beans and vegetables

A meal-plan suggestion

Breakfast

- Fruit juice - add sugar, glucose or Maxijul
- Cereal or porridge -use fortified milk and add sugar
- Bacon, ham, cheese or eggs - cream can be added to scrambled egg
- Bacon or sausage - fry rather than grill
- Toast - butter when hot, add jam or honey
- Tea or coffee - use fortified milk and sugar or glucose

Mid-morning

- Milkshake or milky coffee - use fortified milk and sugar/ glucose/Maxijul
- Complan/Build-Up/Meritene, with a scoop of ice-cream
- Biscuits or cheese and crackers

Mid-day meal

- Meat, fish, cheese or eggs
- Mashed potatoes - add butter and fortified milk
- Vegetables - add butter
- Gravy or white sauce - add cream or cheese to sauce
- Dessert - make milk puddings and instant desserts with fortified milk

- Add jam and cream to milk puddings
- Make jelly half water, half evaporated milk
- Add ice-cream, cream or whole milk yogurt to fruit
- Sugared squash, cordial or fizzy drink

Mid-afternoon

- Tea or coffee - use fortified milk and sugar, glucose or Maxijul
- Cake or scone with butter or hot buttered toast

Evening meal

- Soup - make up with fortified milk, add cream or cheese
- Meat, cheese, fish, eggs, pulses or nuts
- Vegetables with butter or salad with mayonnaise
- Potatoes, bread, pasta or rice. Add butter, oil, sauce, cream or cheese
- Desserts, as mid-day meal
- Sugared squash, cordial or fizzy drinks

Bedtime

- Milky drink: Build-Up/Complan/Meritene, drinking chocolate or Horlicks
- Cheese and biscuits or sandwich

Between meal snack ideas

- Cubes of cheese
- Nuts
- Teacake/scone with spread
- Crisps
- Peanut butter sandwich
- Fruit cake
- Creamed rice in a carton
- Ice-cream
- Individual trifle/cheesecake/mousse
- Dried fruit
- Toasted bagel & cheese
- Cheese & biscuits
- Pork pie or sausage roll
- Full cream yogurt
- Chocolate, toffee, fudge, boiled sweets, marshmallows, jellies

High protein/high calorie drinks

- Milkshakes made with ice-cream and milkshake syrup
- Milky hot drinks e.g. drinking chocolate or Horlicks made with fortified milk
- Double cream can be added on top of a hot milky drink
- Build-Up/Meritene or Complan can be bought from chemists
- Ice-cream soda can be made by adding ice-cream to a fizzy drink
- Drink cordials and canned drinks that are not sugar free
- Fruit smoothie - blend fruit with milk plus ice-cream/ yogurt and honey/malt
- Homemade milkshakes - see recipe on opposite page

Prescribed supplements

There are some food products available on prescription. Your Dietitian or Doctor may advise you to include these in your diet.

There are a variety of presentations available, e.g.

- Milk based drinks
- Juice based drinks
- Puddings
- Soups

Aim to have the following supplements each day:

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Homemade fortified milkshake

- 200ml full cream milk
- 2 tablespoons milk powder (Marvel, supermarket own brand)
- Milkshake powder or syrup to taste

Method

Add a little of the milk to the milk powder and mix into a paste, then add the rest of the milk. Add milkshake powder/syrup to taste.

You can also add pureed fruit, ice cream or double cream.

If you have any questions

Please telephone 01480 364672 and ask to speak to your named dietitian:

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 364240

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