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Eating enough to support your recovery in hospital

Nutrition and Dietetic Service

Information for Patients

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During illness and after surgery, many people lose their appetite. Good nutrition is really important to support your recovery so you should make sure the food that you eat is as nourishing as possible.

On admission to hospital, staff will carry out a nutrition screening check to highlight any risk of undernutrition (referred to as the 'MUST' score by staff). If you score 1 or more, the advice on this leaflet will help you:

- You will need to eat a variety of foods, choosing higher calorie or full fat options when possible. For example choose full cream milk in drinks and on cereal, and thick and creamy yoghurts rather than the diet or low fat ones.
- You will be given a paper menu to tell you about the dishes on offer at mealtimes. When choosing from the menu, higher calorie options will have this arrow symbol:

- The 'smaller energy dense meals' section of the menu contains choices which have more nutrition in a smaller portion size. This is ideal if you have a poor appetite.
- Whenever possible choose food which is high in protein, as protein is important for the body to recover. This includes meat, fish, beans, lentils, cheese, milk and yoghurts. These items will have this 'P' symbol:


- If you feel full quickly, have your main meal rather than filling up on the starter / soup.
- You can add more calories to your food by adding extra butter for example to mashed potatoes, jacket potato, vegetables, toast, bread rolls, and crackers.
- There is no need to rush your meal. It is fine to take a rest between the main course and the pudding if that helps.
- Make sure you choose something for each meal time, even if your appetite is small. It does not matter if you do not finish everything that is served.
- If you need help with eating, drinking, or opening packets, please ask for help. A red tray may be used identify those needing help from staff.
- If you find ordering your meals difficult, a weekly meal planner can be completed for you by family or friends that know you best.
- Try to choose some hot meals and/ or some hot puddings over the day, as these tend to have more protein and energy in them.

- When you have a small appetite, it helps to eat 'little and often' so try and have something between meals. Snacks are available 3 times a day whilst in hospital. Snack options are listed on the hospital menu.
- Nourishing drinks can also help to provide the nutrition you need. Try a glass of full cream milk between meals, a malted milk drink (Horlicks or Ovaltine) or hot chocolate.
- Complan or Aymes drinks from staff are also a good way to get extra nourishment. These come in a variety of flavours: strawberry, chocolate, vanilla, banana, chicken and vegetable. Ask for these at any time, they do not need to be prescribed.
- If you have dietary requirements such as an allergy or intolerance, please speak to the ward staff who can help you choose suitable options.
- Whilst your appetite is poor the food you eat will be recorded on a chart, so your nutrition progress can be checked. You may be able to help staff with completing this.
- You should be weighed regularly whilst in hospital. If you start losing, or continue to lose weight, please ask your nurse to inform the ward Dietitian.
- Friends and relatives may bring food and snacks in for you, but these must be in accordance with trust guidelines. A guide to the types of food you can bring into hospital can be found on 'your health'. This could include:



If you have been given advice before from a health care professional to follow a specialised diet, you will need to continue with this. If you are unsure how this will combine with the advice given here, or are struggling with a part of your diet, please speak to your Doctor, Nurse or Dietitian, for guidance.

If you have diabetes, the advice on this leaflet may not be suitable for you. Speak to your ward staff or diabetes team for more support.

Health information and support is available at www.nhs.uk or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice
Visit www.uhleicester.nhs.uk for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals.
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact uhl-tr.informationforpatientsmailbox@nhs.net

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہِ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

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If you would like this information in another language or format such as EasyRead
or Braille, please telephone 0116 250 2959 or email uhl-tr.equalitymailbox@nhs.net

We are a research hospital and you may be asked to take part in research

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