

# Eating enough to support your recovery at home

## Nutrition and Dietetic Service

Information for Patients

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When you are sick you often don't feel hungry and find mealtimes a struggle. Eating well is really important to help you get better. You should make sure the food that you do eat is as nourishing as possible. If you are struggling to eat enough, you are losing weight or strength in your muscles, you need to think about the foods you are eating. Try some of the following tips:

- Choose higher calorie or full fat options when possible. These foods are usually recommended in small amounts but they can be good at this time. For example have full cream milk in drinks and on cereal. Have thick and creamy yoghurts.
- Avoid 'diet', 'low fat' or 'low calorie' foods and drinks at this time as they will not give you as much energy.
- You can add to the foods you have, for example:
  - add extra calories to your food by adding extra butter e.g. to mashed potatoes, jacket potato, vegetables, toast, bread rolls, and crackers.
  - add milk powder to milk. Whisk 2 to 4 tablespoons of milk powder into a pint of milk.
  - add grated cheese, cream cheese and cream to foods e.g. soups, sauces, curries.
  - use mayonnaise, salad cream or dressing in sandwiches and salads.
  - add honey/ syrup/ jams to porridge, milky puddings, toast, teacakes.
- Try to include some foods which are high in protein. This includes meat, fish, beans, lentils, cheese, milk and yoghurts, tofu, Quorn and nuts.
- Take your time and relax. 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.
- If having a meal feels too much, try having small portions; you can always go back for more.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

Visit [www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk](http://www.leicestershospitals.nhs.uk) for maps and information about visiting Leicester's Hospitals  
To give feedback about this information sheet, contact [InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:InformationForPatients@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)

- Make sure you have something at each meal time, even if your appetite is small.
- When your appetite is poor it helps to eat 'little and often'. Try and have something between meals as well. Think about having something 5 to 6 times a day.
- Drinks can also help to provide the nutrition you need. Try a glass of full cream milk between meals, or milkshakes, smoothies, malted milk drinks (Horlicks or Ovaltine) or hot chocolate.
- Powdered supplements made up with milk, such as Complan, Meritene, and Aymes Retail are available from most supermarkets and pharmacies. They can be used between meals. These come in a variety of flavours.
- Eat more of the food you enjoy at the times of day when you feel most like eating.
- It is fine to use convenience foods from your cupboard or freezer if you don't feel like cooking, for example biscuits, soup, baked beans, ready meals, tinned puddings, custard.
- Take drinks after meals if you feel full easily.
- A small amount of exercise may improve your appetite.
- It is important to eat a varied diet if possible.

Weigh yourself regularly and keep a record. If you are unable to weigh yourself be aware of visual signs of weight loss, such as jewellery and clothes becoming looser. If you continue to lose weight talk to your doctor, nurse or dietitian.

**If you have had advice from a health care professional before to follow a special diet, you will need to carry on with this. If you are not sure how this will work with the advice given here, or are struggling with a part of your diet, please speak to your doctor, nurse or dietitian for help.**

The link below may give you some additional tips:

<http://www.lnds.nhs.uk/Library/EatWellWithaSmallAppetiteLNDS008.pdf>

Once you feel better and your appetite returns to normal, it is best to return to eating a healthy balanced diet. The 'Eatwell Guide' is useful to look at and can be viewed from this link:

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/742750/Eatwell\\_Guide\\_booklet\\_2018v4.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/742750/Eatwell_Guide_booklet_2018v4.pdf)

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على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل

જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

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Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

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