

Dietary advice when you need to increase your weight

Nutrition and Dietetics

Produced: July 2025

Review: July 2028

Information for Patients

Leaflet number: 1645 Version: 1

Introduction

Eating well is important. This becomes more important when you have been unwell, have lost weight, or are struggling to eat as much as you used to. You must make every mouthful as nourishing as possible in these situations.

What is a food first approach?

This is where you meet your nutritional needs through ordinary food and fluids. This can happen in 3 main ways:

1. Fortifying the food you eat.
2. Have 1 to 2 nourishing drinks throughout the day.
3. Have 2 to 3 high energy snacks in between meals.

This leaflet will give advice on how to meet your nutritional needs. You will be adding more energy and protein to your food to help you gain weight. We also make suggestions for those following a plant-based or lactose free diet.

A dietitian or doctor may prescribe oral nutritional supplements if you keep losing weight or are struggling to get all the nutrients from food alone. Nutritional supplements can be used in addition to this advice, if needed.

Food fortification

Food fortification is a way to increase the amount of energy and protein in your diet without making the portion size bigger. Adding high energy foods to regular meals increases their nutritional value. This will help you meet your nutritional needs. Food fortification can be applied to both food and drinks throughout the day.

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How to fortify a meal:

| Food source and portion size | Energy and protein content | How to fortify a meal |
|---|---|--|
| Full fat milk Per 200ml | 132 calories 7g protein | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be used in hot drinks, bowls of cereal or porridge (use full fat milk instead of semi-skimmed milk). |
| Milk powder Per 2 tablespoons serving | 165 calories 8g protein | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add milk powder to glasses of whole milk for extra. protein and energy (2 to 4 tablespoons of powder per pint of milk). Add to sweeter soups such as cream of tomato. Can also be used in tinned or cup-of-soups. Create a paste with a smaller amount of milk to add to foods such as scrambled egg or mashed potato. |
| Cheese per 30g serving | 125 calories 7g protein | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be added to mashed potato, soup or baked beans. Can be used as a topping on toast, pasta or jacket potatoes. |
| Double Cream per 30ml serving | 140 calories 1g protein | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be added to pasta sauces. Can be added to desserts. Can be added to food items such as scrambled eggs, porridge, fruit. |
| Full fat/ Greek yoghurt per 100g serving | 99 calories 4g protein | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Added to curries, chilli con carne or dhal. A snack by itself, or can add fruit or honey as a topping. Added to smoothies. |
| Oils or butter Per 2 tablespoons serving (30g) | Oil: 270 calories Butter: 160 calories | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fry or roast foods in oil rather than grilling or baking them. Add extra to vegetables, potatoes, curries and stews. |
| Spreads like jam or peanut butter Per 2 tablespoons serving (30g) | Jam: 76 calories Peanut butter: 90 calories, 8 g protein | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add as much as you want to foods such as toast, crumpets or bagels. Add on top of rice pudding , hot sponges or porridge. |
| Syrup/honey Per 1 tablespoons serving | Golden syrup: 50 calories Honey: 50 calories | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add as much as you want to Greek yoghurt, fruit or porridge. Add to drinks such as smoothies, milkshakes or hot drinks. Spread on toast, bagels, crumpets or bread. |

Plant based / lactose-free alternatives to fortify a meal:

| Food source and portion | Energy and protein content per portion | How to fortify a meal |
|--|--|---|
| Nut butters Per 2 tablespoons (30g) | Peanut: 190 calories, 8g protein Almond: 174 calories, 6g protein Cashew: 220 calories, 7g protein | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add generously to toast, bread, bagels. • Drizzle over fruit and yoghurt. • Add as a topping to porridge. • Use as a base for satay noodle dishes. • Add to milkshakes and smoothies. 'Sweetened' alternate milks have a higher energy content and should be chosen where possible. |
| Plant based milk 200ml Serving | Oat: 90 calories, 2g protein Almond: 50 calories, 1g protein Soya: 84 calories, 7g protein | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose a fortified plant-based milk* and add to cereals, porridge, hot drinks, or milkshakes. • Add to cooking such as scrambled eggs, mashed potato. |
| Plant based cheese Per 30g portion | Soft cheese: 66 calories, 1g protein Plant based mature cheese: 101 calories, 0g of protein | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add as a topping to toast, potatoes, crackers or bread. • Add as a filling to sandwiches, salads or as a topping for soup or toast. |
| Soya yoghurt Per 100ml portion | 51 calories 4g of protein | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be added to sauces. • Add to drinks such as milkshakes or smoothies. • On the side of meals like curry, dhal or chilli con carne. • Add to fruit and honey or cereals. |
| Syrups or jams Per 1 tablespoons portion (15g) | Maple syrup: 39 calories Golden syrup: 50 calories Jam: 38 calories | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add as much as you want to toast, crumpets or bagels. • Add to fruit and yoghurt bowls. • As a topping on puddings or with cereals or porridge. |
| Oils Per 1 tablespoons portion (15g) | Olive: 135 calories Sunflower: 135 calories Vegetable: 135 calories Coconut: 150 calories | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add as much as you want to cooked foods. • Fry or roast food where possible rather than baking or grilling. • Add oil-based dressings to salads. |

Nourishing drinks

Fortified drinks can be added to your diet to give you more energy and protein throughout the day. You should have between 6 to 8 cups of fluid a day. Try to make 1 to 2 of these drinks to be nourishing.

- Try not to have a drink with your meal. This may cause you to feel full. It is best to have a drink such as water 30 minutes before your meal or at the end.
- Try to space out your nourishing drinks throughout the day. Have it in between meal times or at the end of the day.
- There are a variety of drinks you can use to make up your fluid requirements such as water, juice, squash, hot drinks, smoothies and milkshakes.

Nourishing drink ideas

Fortified hot chocolate

Ingredients:

- 200ml full fat milk
- 30g skimmed milk powder
- 20g hot chocolate powder
- 15ml double cream

Method:

1. Add skimmed milk powder to the full-fat milk and mix well to make fortified milk.
2. Warm the fortified milk and add the hot chocolate powder.
3. Stir in the double cream and serve.

Banana and berry shake

Ingredients:

- 100ml fortified soya milk (or regular milk)
- 100ml of full fat tinned coconut milk
- Half (1/2) a banana
- 100g of mixed fresh or frozen berries
- 1 tablespoon of syrup

Method:

1. Add ingredients to a blender and mix until smooth.

Fortified chocolate soya drink

Ingredients:

- 200ml chocolate soya drink
- 4 tablespoons of vegan cream

Method:

1. Add ingredients together in a glass and whisk with a fork.

More toppings:

- Banana
- Nut butters
- Vegan ice cream
- Crushed nuts
- Syrup

Additional ideas:

- Fortified glass of milk: Add 4 tablespoons of skimmed milk powder to a pint of full fat milk and mix together. It is best to make a paste with the milk powder and a small amount of milk and then add this paste to the rest of the milk.
- Fortified milkshake: Use the fortified milk recipe above and add milkshake powder like Nesquik. Mix together. Add ice cream and yoghurt will also add nourishment.

Add snacks throughout the day

- Having snacks between meals will help you increase the amount of energy and protein you have in a day.
- If you find large plates of food overwhelming, try to aim for a 'little and often' approach and try to eat small portions more often.
- Snacks that are pre-portioned and ready to eat can be easier to eat as they do not need preparation. It may be useful to keep snacks near to you. It will make it easier for you to eat them.
- Try to have 2 to 3 nourishing snacks with 3 meals a day. Or you can have a high energy snack or nourishing drink every 2 hours if a 'little and often' approach works better for you.

100 calorie snack ideas

Savoury

- 30g of cubed cheese / plant based cheese
- 1 samosa
- 2 spring rolls
- A handful of crisps of your choice
- Hard boiled egg
- Cheese twists
- Handful of mini pretzels

Sweet

- Handful of yoghurt covered fruit
- Rice pudding pot
- 2 mini flapjack bites
- Custard pot
- Jelly pot
- Chocolate mousse pot
- 3 cubes of milk chocolate

150 calorie snack ideas

Savoury

- Avocado on 2 crackers
- Hummus and pita bread
- A handful of nuts (mixed) or Bombay mix
- Scotch egg
- Mini pork pie
- Quiche slice
- 1/4 of a sandwich (make a sandwich with 2 slices of bread, cut into quarters and have throughout the day).

Sweet

- Chocolate covered nuts
- Croissant or pain au chocolate pastry
- 1/2 a scone with cream and jam
- Peanut butter with apple slices
- Two rice cakes with nut butter or hazelnut spread
- Ice cream pot

Suggested meal ideas:

The following swaps can be made for a plant based alternative: plant based butter, oat/soya cream, cheese, alternative milk.

Breakfast

Cheesy beans and sausage on toast

- 150g baked beans
- 30g hard cheese
- 1 slice of toast
- 1 tablespoons of butter
- 1 sausage, fried

Switch to vegan sausages for a plant-based alternative.

Creamy porridge

- 25g porridge oats
- 100ml fortified milk
- 1 tablespoon single cream

Additional toppings:

- 1 tablespoons nut butter
- 1 tablespoons honey or syrup
- Handful of berries
- Chopped banana
- Chopped nuts like pecans

Scrambled egg on a bagel

- 2 eggs
- 1 tablespoons of butter
- 6 tablespoons of single cream or 6 tablespoons of full-fat milk with tablespoons of milk powder
- 1 bagel, toasted

Whisk together and add to a saucepan to cook. Serve on a bagel with extra butter.

Lighter meals

Sandwich fillings:

- Hummus and falafel
- Cheese (or dairy free alternative)
- Chicken in a creamy sauce like mayonnaise or coronation
- Egg or tuna mayonnaise
- Ham and cheese
- Avocado and tomato

Toppings on toast:

- Butter and/or nut butters
- Cheese and/or beans
- Fortified scrambled egg

Toppings on jacket potatoes:

- Cheese
- Beans
- Coleslaw
- Tuna mayonnaise
- Chilli con carne
- Butter

Choose 3 smaller items to have together:

- Crackers and cheese
- Greek yoghurt pot
- Bite-sized flapjack pieces
- Pita or crisps and dip like hummus or guacamole
- Mini sausage roll (or vegan)
- Handful of nuts
- Plain or fruit scone with jam and butter
- Pork pie
- Scotch egg



Main meal ideas: fortifying meals

You can fortify everyday home cooked meals with the suggestions in this leaflet. Ready meals can also be fortified with cream, grated cheese or by adding extra oil after cooking.

- Soup: add cream, fortified milk or cheese to either home-made soups, ready made soups or cup-of-soups.
- Meat/ meat alternatives: fry in oil and serve with a creamy sauce.
- Add butter/ plant based spread to potatoes and vegetables and add extra oil for frying.
- Add an oil-based dressing or have mayonnaise with salads.

More tips

- If you find some foods are easy to eat like bowls of cereal, eat these regularly.
- If the smell of food puts you off your food, try to keep away from the kitchen whilst it is cooking or try eating cold foods instead.
- A full plate may put you off eating. Try having food on a smaller plate. You can always add more to your plate later.
- Everyone's appetite is different from day to day. Make the most of your good days.
- Eating something is better than nothing, especially on days when you are not hungry.

More information

If you are concerned about your diet or your weight, please ask your GP/specialist nurse or ward staff if you are in hospital, to be referred to a dietitian.

If a health care professional has advised you to follow a specialised diet you should carry on with this. If you are unsure, please speak to your dietitian, doctor or nurse.

Contact details:

If you have any questions please call your dietitian. Phone number: _____

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