

Patient information factsheet

Eating well with a small appetite

This factsheet contains some ideas that you can try at home to help add extra calories and protein into your diet.

Small or reduced appetite

If you have a small or reduced appetite, the following tips can help you get the most out of your food.

- Eat little and often. Try having small, regular meals and snacks. Six small meals are as good as three large main meals.
- Drink milky drinks and nourishing fluids on a regular basis (see the 'Nourishing fluids' section).
- Avoid having drinks immediately before your meals. These can fill you up before you eat.
- Choose a variety of foods. Alternating what you eat can help keep things interesting.

Food fortification

You can fortify (add nutrients to) your foods to make them more energy and protein-rich. Ideas to try are outlined in the table below.

Add dairy products (cheese, milk, cream or butter) to:	Add milk powder (available from supermarkets) to:	Add sugar, jam or honey to:	Add nuts and nut butters, such as peanut butter, to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • soup • potatoes (especially mashed) • pasta • sauces • vegetables • eggs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • milk or milky drinks • mashed potato • creamy soups • milky puddings (custard or rice pudding) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • toast • puddings • hot drinks • vegetables (as a glaze) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • toast and sandwiches • porridge • cakes and desserts • hot puddings • sauces (toffee, chocolate or satay sauce) • smoothies or milkshakes

Too tired or too unwell to cook

It can be difficult to find the motivation to cook large dishes when you're not feeling well or you're feeling tired. The following tips can help you to keep on top of your food intake.

- Eat foods on toast, such as eggs, cheese, pâté, beans, spaghetti, or tinned mackerel or sardines
- Omelettes. Use fillings to increase energy and protein, such as cheese, ham or mushrooms.
- Sandwiches and rolls. Use fillings such as cheese, tuna mayonnaise, egg mayonnaise, peanut butter or jam.

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- Baked potatoes. Use toppings, such as cheese and beans, tuna mayonnaise, canned chilli or butter.
- Instant or microwavable meals. These can be very useful and there is a wide range of them on the market. Avoid low fat or diet options.
- Soups can be a quick and easy meal to make and can be fortified easily.

Snack ideas

Snacks are a great way to increase your nutritional intake between your meals and they don't require much preparation or cooking.

Savoury	Sweet
Cheese and crackers	Tinned fruit (with or without cream)
Handful of mixed nuts	Pudding pots (yoghurts, custard, rice pudding, mousse or tiramisu)
Crumpets or toast, with butter or margarine and topped with jam or cheese	Commercial nutritional supplements (Meritene or Complian)
Quiches, pies, pasties or sausage rolls	Chocolate

Nourishing fluids

- Milkshakes made up with full-fat milk or fortified milk, ice cream, cream and flavourings (syrops or powders).
- Hot chocolate, Horlicks or Ovaltine made with full-fat milk.

Fortified milk recipe

Ingredients

Four tablespoons milk powder
One pint whole milk

Method

1. Using a little of the milk, mix the powder into a paste.
2. Mix in the remainder of the milk.
3. Use the fortified milk as you would fresh milk. Aim to use at least one pint per day.

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