

Small appetite?

**A guide to eating well if you
have a small appetite or are
trying to gain weight**

Nutrition and Dietetics
Patient Information Leaflet

It is important to eat simple meals, snacks and drinks to increase your protein and calorie intake, without having to increase the amount of food you eat.

If you have a poor appetite, have problems with eating or have lost weight recently, it is important that the food and drinks you have contain as much protein and as many calories as possible.

This can help you to either gain weight or prevent further weight loss, to recover from illness or surgery, heal more quickly and reduce the risk of infection.

General tips

- Aim to have three small meals plus two to three nourishing drinks or snacks in between. Aim to eat every two to three hours.
- Avoid low fat or reduced sugar foods or drinks. For example, use full fat (whole) milk instead of skimmed or semi-skimmed milk, and normal butter, margarine, olive oil or sunflower spread rather than low fat spread.
- Have drinks after meals, rather than before or with meals.
- Try to eat in a relaxed and comfortable environment.
- Aim to drink at least 900 to 1,200ml of fluid daily – this is about six to eight cups. Ideally, 568ml (one pint) of this should be full fat milk or fortified milk.
- If you have a dry mouth or ill-fitting dentures, it will be easier for you to eat soft, moist foods. Add gravy and sauces to help soften foods.
- If your fruit and vegetable intake is poor, try having a glass of orange juice or a fruit smoothie to increase the amount of vitamin C you have. This will help to boost your immune system.

How can I add calories to drinks and snacks?

- You can make fortified milk by adding four heaped tablespoons, about 50g, of dried skimmed milk powder to one pint of full fat milk. This can be used, for example, in drinks, on cereal, in custard and rice pudding and in cheese sauce.
- Spread butter or margarine thickly on bread or crackers and use plenty as follows:
 - Melt onto vegetables, boiled potatoes or jacket potatoes
 - Stir into hot pasta or rice
 - Stir into baked beans or scrambled eggs
- Add grated cheese to soups, omelettes, scrambled eggs, baked beans or tinned spaghetti.
- Add cream, ice cream or custard to puddings or fruit (fresh, tinned or stewed).
- Add double cream or full fat yoghurt to curries and stews and use butter, vegetable oil or ghee generously in cooking.

Breakfast ideas

- Bowl of cereal or porridge with milk, fortified milk, cream and sugar.
- Toast, crumpets or muffins with thickly spread butter or margarine, plus jam, marmalade, peanut butter or egg (scrambled or fried).
- Hot buttered teacakes, hot cross buns or croissants.
- Bacon, sausage and or egg sandwich.
- Pancakes or waffles with maple syrup or jam.

Light meal ideas

- Sandwiches with meat, corned beef, chicken, tuna, egg or cheese, with pickles, relish or mayonnaise.
- 'Cream of' type of soups, or lentil or bean soups, served with bread and butter. You could also add cheese or cream.
- Omelette with extra cheese, or ham with tomatoes, baked beans or bread and butter.
- Buttered toast with cheese, baked beans, egg, pilchards, sardines, bacon or sausage.
- Ravioli or spaghetti on toast – try adding extra butter or grated cheese.
- Macaroni cheese or cauliflower cheese – try adding extra grated cheese and butter.
- Jacket potato with butter, and cheese and beans, cheese or tuna mayonnaise.
- Corned beef hash, cheese and potato pie, quiche, cottage pie, lasagne or fish pie.
- Meat, chicken, fish or vegetarian alternative with cheese or creamy sauce. Have this with mashed potatoes with butter, margarine and cream, roast potatoes or chips and vegetables (with butter melted on top).
- Spiced meat, fish or daal with added cream, ghee or oil, served with rice, chapatti, paratha or roti with added butter, margarine or oil.
- Traditional African or Caribbean soup with peanut butter.
- Traditional African or Caribbean stew served with fried yam, plantain or fried dumplings.

pudding ideas

- Trifle
- Thick and creamy yoghurt
- Rice or other milk-based pudding
- Custard
- Milk jelly
- Chocolate mousse
- Fromage frais
- Egg custard
- Sponge pudding or fruit crumble with custard or cream
- High calorie ice cream or kulfi
- Asian cakes and sweets, for example, Balushahi and rasgulla
- Bulla or grata cake

Nourishing snacks and drinks

- Milky drinks such as coffee, chai tea, malted drinks or hot chocolate.
- Milkshake – try adding ice cream to ready-made milkshakes, lassis, or use the recipe in the next section.
- Small bowl of breakfast cereal with full fat or fortified milk.
- Small piece of cheese with buttered crackers or slices of apple.
- Nuts – plain, salted, roasted, coated in chocolate or with dried fruit; bombay mix.
- Mini pork pies, sausage rolls, Scotch eggs, spring rolls, pakora, onion bhajis, samosas.
- Peanut butter on toast.
- Small slice of fruit cake, fruit malt loaf or bun with butter. You could serve it with small piece of cheese.
- Small square of flapjack.
- Small bag of chocolate buttons.
- Small mince or fruit pie.

Homemade high calorie fortified milkshake recipe:

Ingredients	Makes two milkshakes
Double cream	60ml (4 tablespoons)
Whole milk	180ml (6 tablespoons)
Vanilla ice cream	2 small scoops
Skimmed milk powder	48g (6 level tablespoons)
Estimated calories per milkshake	395 kcal
Estimated protein per milkshake	14g

Whisk/blend all of the ingredients together.

You can flavour the milkshakes with blended fresh fruit such as banana or strawberries, milk powder flavouring such as Nesquik or Ovaltine, Nutella or blended chocolate biscuits (e.g. bourbons or Oreos – use two biscuits **per portion**).

You can store the milkshake in the fridge for a maximum of 24 hours.

Nutritional supplement drinks

Another way of increasing your nutritional intake is to try nourishing drinks such as Meritene®, Complan®, Nurishment®. You can buy these from pharmacies or larger supermarkets.

Still concerned?

If you are still concerned about your appetite or weight, please contact the healthcare professional who gave you this sheet or your GP.

Please use this space for any notes you may wish to make:

If you have any questions, or if there is anything you do not understand about this leaflet, please contact:

Dietitian Department at Russells Hall Hospital on **01384 244017** (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Community Dietitian Department at Stourbridge Health and Social Care Centre on **01384 323749** (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday)

Russells Hall Hospital switchboard number: 01384 456111

This leaflet can be downloaded or printed from:

<http://dudleygroup.nhs.uk/services-and-wards/nutrition/>

If you have any feedback on this patient information leaflet, please email patient.information@dgh.nhs.uk

This leaflet can be made available in large print, audio version and in other languages, please call 0800 073 0510.

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