

# Improving dietary intake to prevent weight loss

Information and advice for patients

## Nutrition & Dietetics

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**Quick tip:** share this leaflet with anyone who helps with food shopping or preparing meals so they can help – e.g. family, friends, neighbours, carers

This leaflet will be suitable if you have experienced any of the following:

- Your dietary intake has reduced due to low appetite or you have difficulty eating
- You have experienced unintentional weight loss or are underweight
- You want to gain weight

This leaflet aims to help increase your daily calorie intake to prevent weight loss or gain weight.

It is recommended to aim to increase your calorie intake by at least 500kcal per day in order to gain weight or stop further weight loss.

### Small Frequent Meals

If you have a small appetite, eating more frequently can help you to increase the amount of food you eat throughout the day. Try to aim to have 3 small meals and 3 snacks every day, plus puddings after your meals.

**Example:**

**Breakfast:** 2 crumpets with butter

**Mid-morning:** 1 small pot yoghurt with grapes

**Lunch:** Tinned soup with egg mayonnaise sandwich & cake slice

**Mid-afternoon:** 1 sausage roll

**Evening meal:** Small jacket potato buttered with tuna mayonnaise & rice pudding

**Before bed:** 3 crackers with cheese

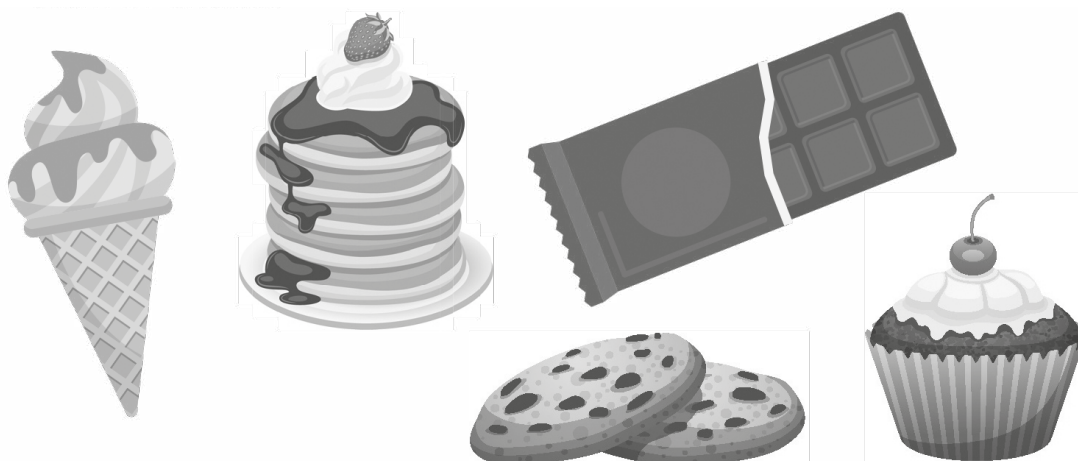
## Tips:

- Aim for a portion that you can manage (a large portion can be off putting, and you can always have more later).
- Avoid over-eating or force feeding – if you feel full or uncomfortable stop and try again later.
- It is okay if you don't finish every meal – it is better to eat a small amount than nothing at all, try to make up for it with snacks or puddings later.
- Remember to take snacks out with you if you are going to be away from home or eat whilst you are out.
- If you have reduced mobility, keep snacks and drinks within easy reaching distance (choose foods that are not likely to spoil or go off)

## Here are some ideas of small meals or snacks that are high in calories:

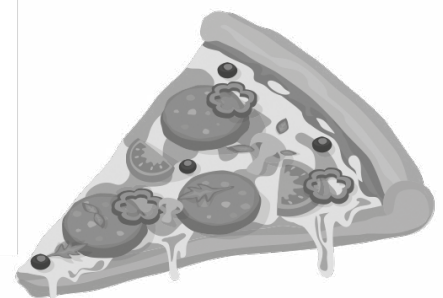
### Sweet snacks/small meals

- Cereal, wheat bisks (e.g. Weetabix) or porridge with full fat milk
- Toast, crumpets or croissants with butter, jam or honey
- Biscuits (choose ones covered in chocolate, shortbread or a double biscuit with a filling such as jam or cream)
- Cake slice, muffin, doughnut, millionaires shortbread or brownies
- Pudding pots such as custard, rice pudding, trifle, mousses, tiramisu
- Small chocolate bar
- Pastry such as chocolate éclair, cinnamon swirl,
- Baklava or Turkish delight
- Sliced or tinned fruit with ice cream, custard or cream
- Dates or dried apricots
- Full fat yoghurt pot
- Chin-chin, kunafa
- Pancakes with toppings such as jam, honey, chocolate spread, ham or cheese



## Savoury ideas

- Buttered toast with eggs, cheese, baked beans or tinned spaghetti
- Homemade or tinned soup (choose creamy soups)
- Sandwich (suggested sandwich fillings – egg/tuna mayonnaise, cheese and ham, cold meat, quorn, falafel, hummus, tinned salmon)
- Jacket potato with cheese, tuna/egg mayonnaise, coleslaw
- Macaroni cheese, cauliflower cheese, or canned ravioli
- Cheese & crackers
- Pizza slices
- Small portion of chips
- Sausage rolls or pork pie
- Nuts, Crisps, plantain chips, or Bombay mix
- Hummus, sour cream dip or guacamole with tortilla chips
- Samosas or onion bhaji
- Fried pierogi or dumplings



## Calorie boosters: making the most of every mouthful

A simple way to increase nutrients and energy is to add extras into your food.

### Here are some ideas:

Add butter, margarine, spreads, or oil (such as olive, rapeseed, vegetable) to vegetables, potatoes, curries, casseroles, salads

Add jam, peanut butter or honey to cereal, porridge, yoghurt, puddings such as rice pudding or custard

Add cream to tea, coffee, hot chocolate, mashed potato, soups, casseroles, poured over puddings, cakes or fruit

Add cheese and/or mayonnaise to salads, sandwiches, potatoes, pasta, soups or omelettes, baked beans

Add full fat yogurt to cereal, fruit, smoothies, curry, marinades.

Add nuts and seeds to cereals, yoghurts, salads, casseroles, curries, puddings. Try adding ground almonds into pancake batter or porridge.



### Some other small changes that can boost calories are:

- Switching cooking methods – for example frying or roasting in butter or oil rather than boiling or steaming in water
- Opting for products with added sugar, honey, chocolate, nuts or dried fruit (such as biscuits, cereals, baked products and pastries)
- Opt for foods that are preserved in oil for example sundried tomatoes or roasted peppers in oil or foods preserved in juice or syrup such as tinned fruit
- Checking the labels and going for the higher calorie products
- Opting for full fat products such as milk, yoghurts, cheese and avoiding “low fat”, “low/no sugar” or “diet foods”

#### Fortified milk

By adding skimmed milk powder to full fat milk you are increasing calories every time you have a milky drink or use milk in sauces, puddings etc.

Recipe:

1. Take 1 pint of full fat milk
2. Pour a small amount into a jug and add 4 ½ tablespoons of skimmed milk powder, mix until forms a small paste
3. Pour in the remaining milk
4. Use every time you would use milk – e.g. milky drinks, tea, coffee, cereal, puddings, sauces etc

## Nourishing Drinks

Drinks are a good way of getting in extra calories, especially if you have a low appetite or get full quickly. Try swapping tea, water or sugar free squash, (which have no calories) for high calorie drinks such as:

- Warm or cold milky drinks such as malted milk drinks (such as Ovaltine or Horlicks), Complan, hot chocolate, lassi,
- Milky coffees – such as cappuccino or latte (made at home or at a café)
- Milkshakes – store bought or homemade (see below)
- Fruit juices or smoothies – store bought or homemade (see below)

**\*Try to avoid having drinks too close to meals to avoid being too full before eating**

### Homemade Smoothie

Ingredients:

- Handful of fresh/ frozen/tinned fruit of choice such as berries, peaches, mango, pineapple or oranges
- 200ml fruit juice
- 2 tablespoons yoghurt
- 1-2 teaspoons sweetener of choice (such as honey or maple syrup)

Method:

- Mix/blend ingredients together and serve cold



### Homemade Milkshake

Ingredients:

- 200ml fortified milk (see above)
- 3 teaspoons milkshake powder
- 2 tablespoons double cream or melted ice cream

Method:

- Mix/blend ingredients together and serve cold



### Homemade Hot chocolate

Ingredients:

- 150ml fortified milk (see above)
- 4 tablespoons double cream
- 4 heaped teaspoons hot chocolate powder

Method:

- Mix milk and cream in a cup
- Warm up in microwave
- Stir in hot chocolate powder



## Homemade Mango Lassi

### Ingredients:

- 150ml fortified milk (see above)
- 150-200ml full fat yoghurt
- 150g chopped mango
- 4 tablespoons of sugar

### Method:

- Mix/blend ingredients together until smooth and serve cold



**For even more calories and protein you could try also adding the following to your drinks:**

- Double cream
- Ice cream
- Melted chocolate/cocoa powder
- Marshmallows on top
- Squirty cream
- Biscoff®/Nutella®/peanut butter
- Condensed milk
- Full fat yoghurt (thick and creamy)

**Suggested activity:** (complete overleaf)

1. Write down what you typically eat and drink in a day
2. Have a look through and think of what you could add in to boost calories
3. Can you make any swaps to increase calories?
4. Can you add any snacks or nourishing drinks?

**Example:**

**Breakfast – porridge made with semi skimmed milk and cup of tea with semi skimmed milk**

*Boosters: switch semi-skimmed to whole milk, add 1-3 heaped teaspoon(s) of jam, honey, ground almonds to porridge, swap cup of tea for cup for a cappuccino*

**Mid-morning: Cup of tea with semi-skimmed milk**

*Boosters: swap semi-skimmed milk for fortified milk, add x2-3 chocolate digestive biscuits*

**Lunch – Salad of lettuce, tomatoes, cucumber and 2 slices of ham and 1 glass of orange squash**

*Boosters: add a boiled egg, cheese or piece of quiche, add mayonnaise or olive oil; swap orange squash for homemade fruit smoothie*

**Mid-afternoon: handful of strawberries**

*Boosters: add a pot of full fat yoghurt*

**Evening meal - stewed mince, mashed potato made with semi skimmed milk and boiled carrots, glass of water, 2 scoops ice cream**

*Boosters: Fry mince in 1 tbsp oil, swap semi-skimmed milk for full fat cream, roast carrots in 1 tbsp butter; swap water for fruit juice, add chopped nuts and chocolate sauce to ice cream*

**Before bed: nothing**

*Boosters: Homemade fortified hot chocolate (see recipe on page 11)*

**Activity**

**Breakfast**

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What could you add or swap?
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**Mid-morning**

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What could you add or swap?
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**Lunch**

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What could you add or swap?
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**Mid-afternoon**

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What could you add or swap?
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**Evening Meal**

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What could you add or swap?
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**Before bed**

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What could you add or swap?
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## General tips

- Keep your store cupboard and fridge stocked with ingredients, snacks, puddings and meals that require little to no preparation for example:
  - tinned meat & fish,
  - tinned soups,
  - tinned beans or pasta,
  - tinned fruit and vegetables,
  - small pudding pots such as rice pudding, custard,
  - long life milk, skimmed milk powder, condensed or evaporated milk
  - Biscuits, chocolate bars, cereal bars, flapjack
  - Spread such as jam, marmalade, peanut butter, chocolate spread
  - Pre-prepared ready meals
- Try freezing extra portions of cooked meals to be used later
- Maintain good oral hygiene and ensure dentures fit correctly
- Small amounts of physical activity can help to improve appetite – try going for a small walk, wander around the garden or even chair exercises if your mobility is reduced
- Eating with others can help improve appetite – try eating with a friend, family or join a lunch club

If preparing meals is difficult make use of convenience foods or food delivery service such as:

- Supermarket ready meals
- Local council services such as meals on wheels
- Wiltshire Farm Foods <https://www.wiltshirefarmfoods.com/> or 0800 077 3100
- Oakhouse Foods <https://www.oakhousefoods.co.uk/> or 0333 370 6700

Following the advice in this leaflet should help you to improve your nutritional intake and prevent further weight loss.

If you are struggling to follow this advice or you are still losing weight please contact your GP or dietitian.

## Images

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