

How to make the most of your meals (High Protein High Calorie Dietary Information)

Following an illness or surgery you need to have extra protein and calories to repair body tissue. This is especially important if you have lost weight or have a poor appetite.

This sheet gives you advice on how to increase your protein and calorie intake. This may mean stepping away from healthy eating and choosing a diet that provides you with more fat and sugar. Once you have recovered and your appetite and body weight are back to normal, you can gradually return towards healthy eating again.

Main points to remember:-

1. Try to include 3 small meals per day as well as 2-3 snacks or milky drinks.
2. Choose at least 2 servings of protein foods each day. See meals ideas for ways to include protein.
3. Try to include foods high in fat and sugar to give you extra calories.

Ways to add calories

Foods high in fat and sugar are good sources of calories. DO NOT choose low fat/low sugar foods. Take as much as you can of the following:-

- Margarine/Butter - spread generously on bread, toast, buns, crackers and add to vegetables, pasta and potatoes.
- Sugar, honey, jam or syrup – add to porridge, breakfast cereals, desserts and hot drinks.
- Cream/evaporated milk - add to soups, puddings, tinned fruit, mashed potato and sauces.
- Full fat salad cream/mayonnaise - add to mashed potatoes, eggs, tuna in sandwiches.
- Cheese – add to sandwiches/have on toast, grate and add to soup, mashed potato, savoury sauces and vegetables.
- Puddings made with sugar and full fat milk e.g. rice pudding, custard, semolina and tapioca.
- Add cream/ice cream to crumble, sponge puddings and fruit pies.
- Hot drinks made with sugar and full fat milk e.g. coffee, hot chocolate and Horlicks.

Fortified Milk

You can fortify your milk and increase its protein and calorie content by adding milk powder e.g. Marvel or supermarkets own brand. Add 1oz (2 tablespoons) milk powder to each ½ pint milk. Liquidise together or mix the powder to a paste before adding the rest of the milk to stop it going lumpy. Aim to use 1-1½ pints fortified milk each day and use the fortified milk for:-

Milky drinks e.g. Horlicks, Ovaltine, Coffee, Hot Chocolate, Milkshakes.

Puddings e.g. Custards, Milk Jellies, Puddings, Instant Whips, Egg Custards.

Sauces, sweet and savoury.

Breakfast Cereals.

In addition to fortifying your milk you can add 2-3 teaspoons of milk powder to soup, yoghurt, mashed potato, custard, puddings, and porridge.

Enriched Drinks

If you are unable to manage meals, Complan or Nurishment drinks can be taken as a meal replacement. These high protein drinks/soups are available at large supermarkets and pharmacies. They are also good as a supplement drink between meals.

Quick and Easy Meal Ideas- Remember to try and use fortified milk where possible.

Breakfast

- Breakfast cereal, e.g. Porridge, Weetabix, etc, made with full cream milk/fortified milk and cream.
- Poached/Scrambled egg on toast.
- Bacon Sandwich.
- Toast with butter and marmalade or jam.
- Fruit juice or fruit is also important to help to provide other essential nutrients

Light Meals

- Sandwiches filled with cold meat, cheese, tinned fish, egg, peanut butter. Add extra mayonnaise/salad cream.
- Toast with for example baked beans, cheese, spaghetti, egg, sardines, pilchards.
- Homemade/tinned soup with added cheese/cream and bread/sandwich.
- Jacket potato filled with tuna mayonnaise, grated cheese, baked beans.

Main Meals

- Macaroni cheese with grilled tomatoes.
- Omelette with cheese/bacon/tomatoes, bread and butter.
- Shepherd's pie and vegetables add butter and/or cheese to mash.
- Oven ready fish, oven chips and peas.
- Sausage, mashed potato and baked beans.
- Roast meat with potatoes and vegetables.

Puddings

- Stewed fruit (fresh or dried) with custard made with full fat milk.
- Jelly with added fruit and evaporated milk.
- Milk pudding, e.g. rice pudding, full fat milk and add extra cream.
- Vanilla ice cream.
- Thick and creamy yoghurt/mousse desserts.

Snacks

- Biscuits e.g. digestives, rich tea, ginger nut, Hob Nobs, Garibaldi, chocolate varieties.
- Toasted teacakes/crumpets, malt loaf with butter/spread.
- Bread, toast, crackers. crispbreads with butter and cheese.
- Yoghurt and fruit.
- Breakfast cereals with full fat milk.
- Milkshakes - milk, ice-cream and fruit or ready prepared powder mix with full fat milk.

Patients with diabetes

It is important to ensure that you meet your protein and calorie needs during periods of illness or after surgery. Foods high in fat and sugar are a good source of calories, increasing your intake of these foods will help to meet your raised needs. You do not need to follow the normal healthy eating advice during this time. The advice in this information leaflet is appropriate to follow.

Sugary liquids can cause a sudden rise in your blood sugar levels and therefore are best avoided during illness or after surgery. Have sugar free squash or 'diet' fizzy drinks instead of ordinary fizzy drinks and glucose energy drinks, such as Lucozade. Illness or surgery can cause your blood sugar levels to rise. During these periods it is important that your blood sugar levels are monitored regularly. You may require a review of your medication.