

Dietary advice for people with poor appetite / unplanned weight loss

Food is a useful medicine. It contains protein, vitamins and minerals to help the body repair itself and gives valuable energy for recovery. However, when you feel ill you may not have much of an appetite, just when you need the food most!

Try to include the following in the daily diet:

- 3 small meals daily as well as 2 – 3 snacks or milky drinks.
- At least 1 pint of fortified full cream milk.
- 2 servings of protein-rich food: meat, chicken, fish, well-cooked eggs, cheese, yoghurt, nuts, beans or lentils.
- 1 serving of bread, potatoes, rice, pasta, cereal or chapattis with each meal. Choose wholemeal varieties where possible.
- Fruit and vegetables daily. Drink a glass of orange juice, grapefruit juice, or squash fortified with Vitamin C if little fruit is eaten. (Fruit juice is not advised for people with Diabetes if blood glucose levels are high).
- At least 6 – 8 cups of fluid e.g. tea, coffee, fruit juice, fruit squash, soups and milky drinks. Taking drinks after meals rather than before or during them may help if people feel full quickly.

Try high calorie snacks and drinks:

- Breakfast cereals with fortified full-cream milk
- Cheese and biscuits
- Full-fat / Thick and Creamy yoghurt
- Cold, ready-made desserts, e.g. trifles, crème caramels, fromage frais, individual custard pots.
- Small sandwich – filled with cold meat, bacon, tinned fish, cheese, hard-boiled egg, peanut butter, meat or fish paste, hummus.
- Teacake, scone, crumpet, bagel or current bun with butter/margarine and jam
- Horlicks, Ovaltine, Bournvita, Cocoa, drinking Chocolate made with fortified full-cream milk. (Diet, Light or low-sugar versions of these drinks should be used by people with Diabetes if blood glucose levels are high).
- Cold or warm full cream milk – flavoured as desired

Fortify food and drink wherever possible by:

People with diabetes should take care when adding sugar, honey, syrup, dried fruit and evaporated milk and should not do so if blood glucose levels are too high.

- Add 4 tablespoons dried milk powder to 1 pint of full cream milk to make fortified milk. Use in place of ordinary milk in drinks, desserts and cooking etc.
- Add cream, evaporated milk, dried milk powder or grated cheese to milk based sauces
- To soup add grated cheese, cream, dried milk powder, evaporated milk, dumplings, baked beans or pasta
- To potatoes and vegetables add grated cheese, cream, margarine/butter, salad cream, milk based sauces or fried onions
- To puddings add cream, custard, margarine/butter, evaporated/condensed milk, ice cream, jam, honey, syrup or dried fruit
- To breakfast cereals add fortified milk (see above), evaporated milk, yoghurt, sugar, honey, syrup, fresh or dried fruit.

Keep a record of food and drink consumed.

For further information, contact your GP

Try These Recipes

Rather than filling up on drinks such as tea, coffee, fizzy drinks or water which are low in nutritional value, try making some of the following which are higher in energy and protein.

People with diabetes should take care when adding sugar, honey, syrup and evaporated milk and should not do so if blood glucose levels are too high.

Homemade 'Build Up' Style Milkshake

4 level teaspoons chocolate or strawberry Nesquik powder or 2 teaspoons of Crusha syrup
2 level teaspoons skimmed milk powder
200ml (1/3 pint) full cream milk

Blend together the Crusha and skimmed milk powder with a little milk then add the remaining milk and mix thoroughly with a fork or whisk until completely blended.

Rich Soup

300ml (1/2 pint) soup
3 tablespoons skimmed milk powder

Mix the skimmed milk powder with a little milk to form a smooth paste.
Heat the soup but do not boil, and slowly stir in the paste. Serve hot.

Evaporated milk, cream, or grated cheese, can be added to make the soup even more nutritious.

Fruit Fool

300ml (1/2 pint) thick fruit puree
150ml (1/4 pint) thick custard
(add two tablespoons of skimmed milk powder to milk)
150ml (1/4 pint) chilled evaporated milk
1 tablespoon of honey

Whip the evaporated milk to a thick consistency. Mix the custard with the fruit puree and fold in the milk. Chill before serving.

Commercially available Food Supplements

There are many nourishing drinks which can be bought over-the-counter at most chemists or supermarkets, e.g. Complan or Build-up / Meritene Energis.

What about Healthy Eating?

Low-fat and low-sugar foods are promoted as part of a healthy diet. It is not appropriate to use such foods while you are ill and not eating well. Higher-calorie foods will help you get your energy back and keep your strength up.