

Food First Dietary Advice

Advice for people with a poor appetite or a low BMI

Boost your meals

Add some simple extras to your meals to increase the overall calorie content.

Boosters	Add to...
Butter/ghee (1 teaspoon) 40kcal	Mash potato, vegetables, toast, chapattis, scones, eggs
Double cream (2 tablespoons) 150kcal	Soup, mashed potatoes, sauces, porridge, desserts, milkshakes
Cheese (matchbox/30g) 125kcal	Toast, mashed potatoes, vegetables. Add generously to meals.
Mayonnaise (1 tablespoon) 100kcal	Salads, potatoes, sandwiches
Oil (1 tablespoon) 120kcal	Use in cooking. Drizzle over salads.
Sugar/honey (1 teaspoon) 20kcal	Porridge, hot drinks, desserts, milkshakes
Peanut butter (1 teaspoon) 100kcal	Fruit, toast, porridge, milkshakes

High energy sweet snacks

- Milky puddings (creamy yoghurt, mousse, custard pot, rice pudding, mini trifle)
- Tinned custard or rice pudding
- Ice-cream
- Biscuits
- Chocolate
- Cake (add custard for extra calories)
- Pastries
- Fruit with cream, ice-cream or custard

High energy savoury snacks

- Mini pork pie
- Scotch egg
- Sausage roll
- Cheese and crackers
- Toast with butter/ cheese/ marmalade/ peanut butter
- Nuts
- Crisps with dip
- Bombay mix
- Cup of soup (add tablespoon of cream)

Little and often

- Aim to eat something every 2-3 hours even if it is small
- Opt for nourishing drinks and high energy snacks if you are unable to manage a full meal

Skimmed milk powder

- Add 4x tablespoons skimmed milk powder to one pint of full fat milk. Use over the day as usual milk.
- Add milk powder to soup, mashed potato, white sauces, porridge, etc.

Nourishing drinks

If you are struggling with a low appetite, fluids can be a great way to increase your energy intake. Try:

- Full fat milk
- Hot drinks made up with milk (hot chocolate, milky coffee, Horlicks®, Ovaltine®)
- Milkshakes (Yazoo®, Nesquick®, home-made)
- Over the counter supplement drinks (Complan® or Meritene®)

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Easy preparation food ideas

- Use meal delivery services such as Wilshire Farm Foods®, Oakhouse Foods®, Parsley Box®, I Care®
- Buy ready meals (avoid low-calorie options)
- Buy pre chopped or frozen foods
- Cook meals in bulk and freeze

Dehydration

Keeping hydrated is important for healthy bodily function. Symptoms of dehydration include:

- Headaches
- Thirst
- Dry mouth, lips or eyes
- Tiredness
- Feeling dizzy or lightheaded
- Constipation
- Dark or strong smelling urine
- Urinary tract infections

Staying hydrated

We should aim for **6-8 glasses of fluids daily** which is around 2 litres.

- All fluids count towards your total including: water, milk, fruit juices, squash, coffee, tea, fizzy drinks, milkshakes
- Don't forget foods with a high water content (e.g. fruit, vegetables, soup, ice-cream, jelly, veg/meat stock)
- Increase fluids if you have diarrhoea, a high temperature or during hot weather

Ways to improve appetite

- Get some fresh air (open the window or go for short walk)
- Consider stopping smoking
- Don't fill your plate or put food on a smaller plate to avoid feeling over-faced
- Don't fill up on fluids before or during mealtimes
- Eat the things you enjoy
- Cook in bulk and freeze so you don't have to cook every day

Increase your protein intake

Foods high in protein help to keep our muscles strong and healthy and can help with wound healing, such as pressure ulcers.

Foods high in protein include:

Animal sources:

- Meat
- Fish
- Eggs
- Dairy products (milk, yoghurts, cream, cheese, skimmed milk powder)
- Supplement drinks (Complan®, Meritene®)

Plant sources:

- Pulses and lentils
- Beans
- Peas
- Dahl
- Tofu/soya
- Quorn
- Soya milk