

# How to improve your food and drink intake if you have a poor appetite



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You have been given this leaflet because you have a poor appetite and you may have lost weight. This leaflet will provide information to help you make small changes to what you normally eat to make it as nutritious as possible.

If you normally follow a special diet, for example if you have raised cholesterol or diabetes please discuss this with your dietitian.

Losing weight, having a reduced appetite (Under nutrition) or being dehydrated are not normal signs of ageing and should not be dismissed simply as 'old age' as they can make you ill.

## ONE

# Signs of under Nutrition

Unplanned weight loss

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Loss of Appetite

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Loose fitting clothes/jewellery

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Ill-Fitting dentures

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Tiredness

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Sores around lips

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Hair loss

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## TWO

# Signs of Dehydration

Dark coloured urine (should be straw in colour)

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Dry mouth

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Dry skin

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Loss of appetite

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Light headedness or headaches

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# Top Tips to improve your intake

- It is important to have small regular meals and snacks in between. Remember you can also go back for seconds.
- Try to eat something every 2-3 hours even if it is only something small.
- Have puddings or desserts at least once a day – if you are too full after a meal wait 30 minutes before having a dessert
- Alcohol in small amounts can stimulate an appetite (check with doctor or chemist if taking any medication)
- If you smoke, try not to smoke in the half hour before your meal
- Getting a small amount of fresh air before meals can help stimulate an appetite.
- Take drinks after meals rather than before or with to avoid feeling too full or bloated
- Make the most of 'good days' or times during the day when you feel more like eating
- Enriched nutritional drinks (e.g. Complan® and Build Up®) are available to buy from chemists and supermarkets, and are available in a wide-range of preparations including flavoured drinks and soups
- If after 4 weeks of trying some of the suggestions to your diet, you are still concerned or losing weight please contact your GP Practice.

## How to fortify your meals by adding extra calories:

Foods can be 'fortified' to be made more nourishing. The suggestions below will add calories to your food and can also increase your energy levels:

- Add butter, margarine, mayonnaise and grated cheese to vegetables and jacket or mashed potatoes
- Add grated cheese or cream to soup, scrambled eggs or sauces
- Add extra ice-cream, cream, evaporated milk, custard to stewed/tinned fruit, cake, milky puddings and pies
- Spread thick margarine or butter on bread, scones or chapatti
- Add cheese, cream, evaporated milk, croutons, pasta to soup - choose 'cream of' or 'condensed' varieties
- Add mayonnaise, salad cream and dressings generously
- 4 tablespoons of skimmed milk powder can be added to 1 pint of full cream milk to double the protein content and increase calcium intake. This fortified milk can be used in place of ordinary milk
- Use fortified milk (as above) on cereals and in tea/ coffee.
- Use fortified milk when making sauces - add extra cheese or cream
- Make coffee, hot chocolate with fortified milk - rather than hot water



## FIVE

### Too tired to cook?

There are plenty of meals that you can buy ready-made and can be heated in a microwave or oven, making them quick and convenient. Avoid low fat and healthy eating ready meals.

There are a variety of ways to have your meals provided: Wiltshire Farm Foods, Meal-on-wheels, Oak House Foods, voluntary organisations and supermarket home deliveries.

## Getting the balance right

Even when your appetite is poor it is still important to include foods from the different food groups but remember always choose the most nourishing option.

### **Protein: Meat and fish or alternatives including eggs, tofu, quorn or beans**

- Include these 2-3 times a day

### **Carbohydrates: Potatoes, bread, pasta, rice and breakfast cereals**

- Provide energy, fibre, vitamins and minerals - aim to include with each meal

### **Fruit and Vegetables**

- Aim for 5 a day but do not fill up on these if they replace other more high calorie foods
- Can use tinned or frozen fruit and vegetables instead of fresh
- If struggling have one small glass of fruit juice a day

### **Milk and dairy (cheese and yoghurt)**

- Good source of energy, protein and calcium - have three portions a day
- Aim for one pint of full cream milk a day either as a drink or in meals

### **Energy dense foods: high fat and high sugar foods.**

- Add butter, margarine, vegetable, sunflower or olive oils, mayonnaise, salad dressings, peanut butter, custard or cream to foods

### **Fluid**

- Aim for six to eight cups (about 1.5-2 litres) per day, including a variety of tea, coffee, fruit juice, water or milky drinks

## Store cupboard ideas:

Long life milk (full fat) and skimmed milk powder

Breakfast cereal and porridge

Jam, marmalade, peanut butter & honey

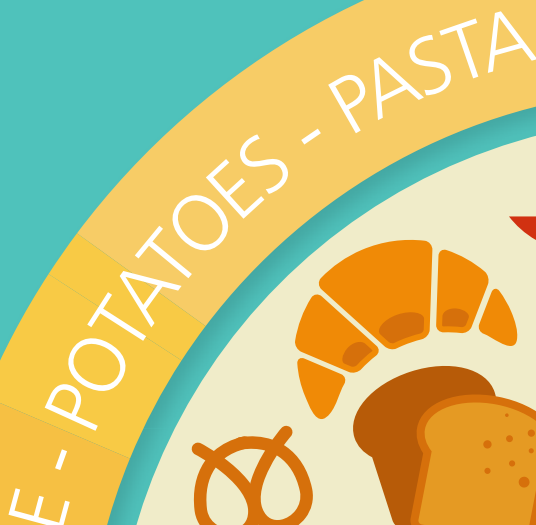
Baked beans, macaroni cheese & spaghetti

Tinned stews, meats and fish

Tinned vegetables & fruit - add butter or cream to these

Horlicks®, Ovaltine®, and drinking chocolate-make with milk for extra calories

Tinned custard, sponge and custard and rice pudding





## Freezer ideas:

Instant/ready-meals e.g. cottage pie, fish pie, roast dinner

Fish fingers, sausages and burgers

Frozen vegetables, frozen fruit e.g. mixed berries

Boil in the bag meals e.g. fish in sauce

Full fat ice-cream

Frozen desserts e.g. jam roly poly, crumbles, gateaux, sponge & chocolate puddings



## Ideas for quick and easy meals:

Why not add some different toppings to toast e.g. cheese, baked beans, scrambled egg, sardines, pilchards, mackerel, pâté or spaghetti.

If you have a toasted sandwich maker you could make a hot snack by having ham tomato and cheese or cheese and pickle sandwiches.

Or you could have a cold sandwich. Try: cheese, tuna or other fish, egg mayonnaise, bacon, jam, or cold meats (e.g. beef or ham).

Baked potatoes – with butter and baked beans, tuna, coleslaw and don't forget to add cheese for extra calories.

Soups – these can be quick and nutritious meals whether they are tinned, from packets or homemade. Choose 'cream of' varieties and add extra cream, cheese or milk.

Have a selection of sausage rolls, pasties, pies, quiches, or scotch eggs that you can nibble on in between meals or to have as part of a meal.

## Quick and nourishing snacks:

It's a good idea to include snacks in between your meals, especially if you are only managing small meals or your appetite is poor.

Here are some ideas:

- Glass of fortified milk with a biscuit or a cake
- Crumpets, tea cake, scones (add butter, jam, chocolate spread)
- Custard pot, trifle or rice pudding (add cream or jam)
- Crackers with spreading cheese or cream cheese
- Chocolate bar or other sweets
- Individual desserts such as chocolate mousse, trifle, yoghurts and ice cream bars (choose full fat varieties)
- Crisps or nuts
- Breakfast cereal or porridge with enriched milk or cream and sugar
- Sausage roll, pork pie or pasties

## INFO

For information about food banks in your area please contact the Salford Central Food bank on **0161 637 4500** or **[www.salfordcentral.foodbank.org.uk](http://www.salfordcentral.foodbank.org.uk)**

This information has been provided to help answer any questions you may have if your appetite is poor. If you have any further questions or concerns, please contact your **GP** or your local **Salford Age UK** office or **[www.ageuk.org.uk/salford](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/salford)**

This leaflet has been developed by the:  
**Nutrition and Dietetic Department -**  
**Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust**  
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