

A Food First Approach

Making the most of what you eat for patients with Diabetes

Are you struggling with a poor appetite? Have you lost weight recently?

If you have answered yes to either of these, then this leaflet could help you.

If you have been seen by the speech and language therapist and diagnosed with DYSPHAGIA (problems with swallowing) please do not use this leaflet.

Eat Little and Often

If you are on insulin or other hypoglycaemic medicines i.e. Gliclazide, always consult your doctor or diabetic nurse before making any dietary changes, as these could have an effect on your blood glucose levels and your medication may need to be altered. However, when you are at risk of malnutrition, the priority may be to prevent further weight loss, rather than keeping your blood glucose within narrow limits.

Try to have 3 meals each day plus 3 snacks and/or nourishing drinks between meals. If you cannot eat a full meal, eat a small amount every 2-3 hours and avoid skipping meals.

Eat what you fancy and if your appetite is better at certain times of the day, aim to eat more at these times. Cold foods can sometimes be more appetizing than hot foods.

Use convenience foods. Ready meals & puddings can be easier to prepare and are just as nutritious.

If you find softer options easier add extra sauces or gravy to your meals.

Choose foods and drinks that are “nourishing” i.e. high in calories and protein such as “whole” milk and other full fat dairy products. Avoid foods labelled “reduced/low fat”.

Continue to choose milk, water, no added sugar squashes and diet fizzy drinks between meals to prevent fluctuations in blood glucose levels and 150ml fruit juice with a meal.

Drinking during meals may make you feel full so try and wait until after you have finished eating to have a drink.

Take Nourishing Drinks between Meals

Aim to drink 6 to 8 cups of fluid each day. Whilst fluids such as water and squash are hydrating, they are not high in calories and may make you full. Include at least two nourishing drinks each day.

Nourishing drinks (usually made with milk) give you extra calories and protein too.

Make drinks with a full cup of whole or fortified milk e.g. hot chocolate, malted drink (Ovaltine™, Horlicks™), coffee or tea.

Add extra cream or skimmed milk powder for even more calories! If easier, try shop-bought milkshakes or smoothies, usually located in the refrigerator aisle.

Milkshake recipe

- 250ml full fat (whole) milk
- 3 level tablespoons (18g) milk powder
- 4 teaspoons (16g) milkshake powder.(e.g. Nesquik™ or supermarket-own brand)
- Method: Mix all ingredients together, blend until smooth. Serve chilled.

If your doctor or diabetic nurse is concerned about high blood glucose levels, choose plainer drinks such as full fat milk or fortified milk (recipe below) and omit milkshake powder.

Fortified Milk Recipe – use instead of regular milk in your drinks, cereals and in cooking

- 1 pint of whole milk (blue top)
- 4 level tablespoons (24g) of milk powder e.g. Marvel® (skimmed) or Nido® (whole milk powder). Shop own-brand options are also available.
- Method: Mix the milk powder with a small amount of milk. Whisk in the rest of the milk, use!

Fortify your Food and Drink

Adding small amounts of high calorie foods to your normal food and drink will help boost the nutritional content without increasing the portion size. This is known as **food fortification**.

When you have diabetes, it is better to fortify your food with higher protein or fat options, rather than sugar, to avoid a spike in your blood glucose levels.

Food fortification ideas:

- Add double or single cream to porridge, sauces, soups, potato (boiled, mashed or jacket), puddings, fruit (fresh, tinned or stewed), hot milky drinks, smoothies and milkshakes
- Add olive oil spread, full fat margarine and/or cheese to potato (boiled, mashed or jacket), pasta, crackers, crumpets, sandwiches, toast, soups, sauces and vegetables
- Add olive oil to pasta and salad dressings, use it for shallow frying foods
- Add full fat mayonnaise to potato (boiled, mashed, chips or jacket) tuna, egg, chicken or add to sandwiches

Other foods you can add include: milk powder, salad cream, ghee, coconut cream, stewed fruit, creamy sauces, evaporated or condensed milk, peanut/almond or other nut butters.

Savoury Snack Ideas

- Cheese and biscuits
- Nuts, peanut butter or other nut butters (if not allergic)
- Wholegrain crisps, popcorn
- Savoury scone with butter
- Cheese straws
- Cubes or slices of cheese or cheese triangles
- Crackers or bread with meat or fish paste or pate
- Poached, boiled, scrambled egg
- Ham, cooked meats or poultry.
- Omelette, frittata or quiche
- Baked beans on toast
- Avocado, Houmous, dips or dahl with bread, toast, wraps, chapatti or pitta bread
- Wraps with coronation chicken or egg/tuna mayonnaise
- Thick and creamy soup with added

Sweet Snack Ideas

Avoid sugary drinks between meals

- Full fat, thick and creamy yoghurt or fromage frais
- Fresh fruit with cream, custard or yoghurt
- Plain biscuits i.e. rich tea, plain digestive
- Fruit and nut bars
- Pastries or crumpets with butter
- Milk puddings e.g. rice pudding, custard, crème caramel, crème brûlée
- Instant dessert e.g. Angel Delight™ or supermarket own brand
- Fruit pie, crumble or tinned fruit in syrup with cream or custard
- Sliced banana or apple with peanut/almond butter (*if not allergic*)
- Plain rice cakes with nut butter
- Frozen banana/grapes or frozen yoghurt

Try to have 3 meals, 3 snacks, nourishing drinks between meals and enrich your food.

If you start to experience hypo or hyperglycaemia which is not normal for you, then please consult your doctor or diabetes nurse as soon as possible

