

# **Food First: Helping you to meet your nutritional needs at home**

**Nutrition and Dietetics**

## **Why have I been given this booklet?**

This booklet provides ideas on a 'Food First' approach to help maximise the nutrition you get from your food and drinks. You may be advised to follow this advice if you have a small, reduced appetite, can only manage small quantities of food, if you are losing weight or struggling to gain or maintain weight. We may provide this leaflet if your nutritional needs are currently increased.

## **What is 'Food First'?**

A "Food First" approach is a way of making the most of your food to get the maximum nutrition. The "Food First" approach means including three steps in your diet each day:

**Step 1:** Have one pint of fortified whole milk (recipe on page 3) throughout the day – use this in exactly the same way as you would normally use milk, e.g. in drinks, on cereal, in puddings and sauces or simply on its own.

**Step 2:** Two to three nourishing drinks or snacks per day - aim to have at least 200 calories in each snack and drink combined or snack or (see snacks and drinks ideas on pages 4 and 5).

**Step 3:** Aim to fortify your foods where possible. Food fortification means adding ordinary ingredients to everyday foods to increase the nutritional content (calories and/or protein) without necessarily increasing the amount of food (portion size) is eaten.

## **Tips for a poor appetite:**

- Eat little and often – try to eat small meals, snacks and drinks every two to three hours
- Do not skip meals – if you cannot manage a main meal, have a nourishing drink and snack instead.
- If your appetite is better at certain times of the day, aim to eat more during that time.
- Serve smaller portions of your meal to prevent feeling overwhelmed – you can then always have more if you still feel hungry.
- Cook extra portions of meals, and freeze them for use another day.
- If cooking is difficult or makes you tired, convenience foods can be useful.
- There is a wide range of frozen, chilled or packet ready meals to try.
- Do not to drink a lot of fluid just before your meal, as this fills you up and reduces your appetite. Remember to keep yourself well hydrated at other times.
- A walk in the fresh air before meals can often stimulate your appetite.

## **What if I am still struggling to meet my nutritional needs despite following the advice in this leaflet?**

If you are continuing to lose weight or struggling to implement the advice in this leaflet, contact your dietitian or ask your GP to refer you to your local dietetic service for further specialist advice.

## **Shopping list**

### **In the freezer:**

- Ice cream
- Boil in the bag fish
- Ready meals (e.g. cottage pie, corned beef hash)

### **In the fridge:**

- Full fat milk
- Cheese
- Cream
- Pies, pasties, quiche
- Full fat yoghurts, mousses and trifles

### **In the store cupboard:**

- Milk powder
- Tinned meat and fish
- Tinned spaghetti, beans, macaroni cheese
- Instant mash potato
- Tinned fruit
- Condensed/evaporated milk
- Puddings - jelly, tinned/individual pots custard/rice pudding
- Horlicks/Ovaltine, drinking chocolate
- Snacks - biscuits (sweet/savoury), crisps, nuts
- Sugar, honey, jam, syrup, lemon curd
- Milkshake powder/syrup
- Tinned/packet soups

## **Meal providers**

If you do not feel well enough to prepare your meals, there are local and national companies who deliver hot or frozen meals directly to your home.

## **How long do I have to follow a “Food First” approach?**

You should continue to follow the “Food First” approach to help you gain and maintain your weight goal. Discuss this further with your GP or dietitian if you require further advice.

## **Swallowing difficulties**

If you have been having difficulties swallowing food and/or fluids, you may have been advised by a speech and language therapist to modify the consistency of the diet and to thin or thicken all the fluids you consume.

If you are unsure if the ideas in this leaflet are suitable for you, check with your speech and language therapist or health care professional for advice.

## **Diabetes or high cholesterol**

If you have diabetes or high cholesterol speak with your GP or dietitian before following the recipes and suggestions in this booklet.

## **Step 1: Fortified milk**

Fortifying full fat milk with dried milk powder will provide extra energy and protein. Use one pint per day.

- 1 pint of fortified milk = approximately 600kcal and 40g protein
- Mix 4 tablespoons of the milk powder into a paste using a little milk taken from 1 pint/585ml of full fat milk. Gradually add the rest of the milk, stirring well to avoid lumps forming
- Store in the fridge and use within 24 hours.

## **Step 2: Include snacks and nourishing drinks**

In addition to your normal meals, include two to three snacks or nourishing drinks per day. This can be particularly useful if you have a small appetite. Keep a supply of snacks handy and ready to eat or drink. Avoid 'diet' or low fat versions of snacks and drinks.

Please note: All calorie content is approximate

### **Sweet snacks:**

<b>Snack item</b>	<b>Calories</b>
1 banana	100
1 all butter shortbread biscuit	100
2 Jaffa cakes	100
1 chocolate digestive	80
1 chocolate mini roll	120
1 slice fruit cake	90
1 jam tart	140
1 egg custard tart	240
1 toasted tea cake with butter	200
1 scone with butter and jam	350
5 jelly babies/marshmallows	100
Small bar of milk chocolate	100
1 fudge bar	100
2 slices malt loaf	120

### **Puddings:**

<b>Snack item</b>	<b>Calories</b>
Individual trifle	200
Individual custard pot	150
1/2 can (200g) rice pudding	200
Luxury chocolate mousse	300
Individual cheesecake	250
Thick and creamy yoghurt (150g)	200

**Fruit fool** (makes three portions)  
(250kcal, 9g protein per serving)

- 300ml pureed fruit
- 150ml custard
- 2 tablespoons milk powder
- 150ml evaporated milk
- 1 tablespoon honey

Whip the evaporated milk to a thick consistency. Add the milk powder and honey to the custard. Mix the custard with the fruit puree and mix in the evaporated milk. Chill before serving.

**Lemon cream** (makes three portions)  
(590kcal, 5g protein per serving)

- 300ml double cream
- 70g caster sugar
- 30g milk powder
- Juice 1 – 1½ lemons

Put the cream and milk powder in a saucepan. Gently heat until the milk powder has dissolved. Add the sugar. Bring to the boil and boil for 3 minutes. Mix in the lemon juice to taste. Place in the fridge to chill.

**Chocolate caramel cream** (makes three portions)  
(400kcal, 6g protein per serving)

- 150ml double cream
- 30g milk powder
- 30ml full fat milk
- 2 x (50g) nougat-caramel chocolate bars finely chopped.

Put the cream and milk powder in a saucepan. Gently heat until the milk powder has dissolved. Add the finely chopped chocolate bars. Heat gently, stirring all time until the chocolate has completely melted. Place in the fridge to chill.

## **Fortified recipe ideas**

### **Fortified porridge/mashed potato/soup/custard (serves one)**

- 1 ladle (125ml) porridge/mashed potato/soup/custard
- 1 tablespoon milk powder
- 2 tablespoons double cream

Mix the milk powder and cream into a smooth paste. Add some full fat milk if the paste is too thick. Mix the paste into the cooked and heated food, serve. The nutritional content will vary dependent on the food item fortified, but the milk powder and cream should add an extra 300 calories and 4g protein.

### **Fortified mousse (makes four portions) (400kcal, 7g protein per serving)**

- 1 pack instant dessert  
(Angel delight, supermarket own brand)
- 125ml full fat milk
- 125ml double cream
- 4 heaped tablespoons of milk powder

Mix the instant dessert powder with the milk powder. Whisk in the milk and cream until thick. Chill until set.

### **Milk jelly (makes four portions) (200kcal, 9g protein per serving)**

- 1 block jelly
- 30g milk powder
- 150ml evaporated milk

Dissolve the block of jelly in hot water and leave to cool. When cool (but before it has set), whisk in the evaporated milk and milk powder. Place in the fridge to set.

## **Savoury snacks:**

Snack item	Calories
Small handful of nuts	100
1 bag of crisps	100
1 bag mini cheddar biscuits	130
3 cheese straws	100
2 crackers and cheese	200
2 cocktail sausage rolls	130
Small pork pie	200
1 mini pasty	110
2 mini scotch eggs	100
Cheese scone with butter	300
1 slice toast with butter	100
2 crumpets with butter	240
Cup a soup	100
Matchbox size of cheese	70

## **Milky drinks:**

200ml (small mug) drink	Calories
Milky Coffee	140
Hot chocolate	180
Ovaltine/Horlicks	230
Milkshake	200
Fortified milk	200

Ask for a copy of our 'Nourishing drinks' leaflet for further ideas and recipes.

### Step 3 - Fortify your foods

Adding extra food items into your normal meals, drinks and snacks will help to boost their nutritional content without increasing the amount that you have to eat or drink.

Here is an example of a food diary with food that has not been fortified compared to food that has been fortified using simple measures – making small changes have increased the total number of calories and protein at the end of the day:

Meal	Standard	Fortified
Breakfast	Porridge made with water Cup of coffee	Porridge made with fortified milk and a handful of raisins or some jam or honey. Cup of milky coffee made with fortified milk
Mid-morning	Cup of tea	Cup of milky tea made with fortified milk and two plain biscuits
Lunch	Small tin of baked beans on one slice of dry toast	Small tin of baked beans on one slice of toast with butter thickly spread and grated cheddar cheese
Mid-afternoon	Cup of coffee made with semi-skimmed milk	Cup of milky coffee made with fortified milk
Evening meal	Oven baked cod fillet with a few boiled new potatoes and peas	Cod fillet fried in vegetable oil, mashed potato made with fortified milk and grated cheese, peas with a knob of butter
Supper	Cup of tea	Horlicks made with fortified milk and two squares of chocolate
<b>Total</b>	<b>500kcal 35g protein</b>	<b>1680kcal 84g protein</b>

### Ideas of products to fortify your foods and drink with:

Product	Calories per tablespoon	Protein (grams)
<b>Dairy</b>		
Cheddar cheese (30g)	125	8
Soft cheese	75	1.5
Condensed milk	65	1.5
Evaporated milk	40	2
Milk powder	50	5
<b>Fats</b>		
Butter	100	0
Double cream	135	0.5
Oil	100	0
Mayonnaise	110	0
<b>Sweet</b>		
Sugar	45	0
Honey	65	0
Syrup (golden, maple)	50	0
Nutella	100	1.5
Jam	40	0
<b>Savoury</b>		
Hummus	25	1
Peanut butter	95	4
Pesto	65	0
<b>Fruit, nuts and seeds</b>		
Sultanas	45	0.5
Peanuts	120	5.5
Granola	60	1.5
Flaxseeds	45	2