



**Northumbria Healthcare**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# A guide to eating a nourishing diet

Issued by nutrition and dietetics

## Why is it important to eat well?

It is important to eat a wide variety of foods to keep healthy. If people can't manage to eat enough food, they can lose weight and miss out on important nutrients.

## What are the consequences of weight loss and a reduced food intake?

You may:

- Be more likely to catch infections or feel unwell. It may take you longer to recover from illness.
- Become weaker. You could find it harder to do your usual day to day activities such as housework, gardening, shopping, and getting out and about. This may mean you have to depend on other people more than usual.
- Have a higher risk of falls.
- Feel lower in mood and lacking in energy.

## What can I do to help me eat better?

There are lots of things you can do. It is important that your food and drink are as nourishing as possible.

## Eat little and often

- Reducing portions and using a smaller plate may make meals more manageable.
- Have small snacks or nourishing drinks in between meals.
- Have a pudding or dessert once or twice a day. Full fat yoghurt, custard, cake or rice puddings are all good choices.
- Have a snack before bed each day.

## Snack ideas

- Slice of fruit cake
- Crackers and cheese
- Toast with spread such as butter, jam, cream cheese or peanut butter
- Sandwich with meat, cheese, fish or egg filling
- Full fat yoghurt, mousse or small pot of trifle
- Toasted teacake or crumpet with butter and jam
- Small bowl of cereal
- Mini sausage rolls or pork pies
- Scone with butter and/or jam
- Cubes of cheese
- Cocktail sausages
- Nuts
- Crisps

## Fortify foods with extra calories

You can boost the calories of your foods or drinks by fortifying foods with extra calories.

- Add an extra knob of butter/margarine to savoury dishes such as pastas, jacket potatoes, scrambled egg, or mixed into mashed potato or vegetables.
- Add a tablespoon double cream or condensed milk into mashed potato, cereal/porridge, creamy soups or sauces, milk or milkshakes or drizzle over puddings.
- Add grated cheese to mashed potato, scrambled egg, pasta dishes or mixed into creamy sauces.
- Add sugar, jam or honey into porridge or puddings or add to hot or cold drinks.
- Generous spread of toppings on bread, crackers, or biscuits such as mayonnaise or salad cream butter/margarine or peanut butter.

**If there are health concerns which you require you to limit intake of fat or sugar, e.g., high cholesterol or diabetes, speak to your healthcare provider)**

## Nourishing drinks

- Drink a pint of full fat milk every day.
- Adding dried skimmed milk powder to full cream milk adds extra calories and protein. Mix 4 tablespoons to a little milk to make a smooth paste, then top up with a pint of milk.
- You could use the milk to make milky coffees, hot chocolate or milkshakes.
- Adding cream, sugar or ice-cream will provide a further calorie boost.
- Buy readymade milkshakes and smoothies from most supermarkets if that is easier than making your own.

- Have a small glass of fruit juice every day. This will help you get enough vitamin C.
- Powdered supplements such as Meritene or Complan are available from most supermarkets and chemists. They can be used between meals.

## Other helpful tips

- Try not to miss or skip meals. If you really can't eat a proper meal have a snack or milky drink instead.
- Ready meals are an easy option if cooking a meal is difficult.
- Tinned or frozen vegetables and fruit are as good as fresh and take less preparation.
- Choose full fat or sugar foods. Avoid "light" or "reduced fat" options.
- Getting some fresh air can help boost the appetite.
- Eating with other people can help, try sharing a snack or meal with a family member or friend.
- Smoking can reduce appetite – avoid smoking around 30 minutes before a meal or snack.

## Contact details:

Your dietitian is:.....

## Contact details

Department of Nutrition & Dietetics Wansbeck General Hospital  
Woodhorn Lane Ashington NE63 9JJ Telephone: 01670 564 006

Department of Nutrition & Dietetics North Tyneside General Hospital  
Rake Lane North Shields NE29 8NH Telephone: 0191 293 4280

## Useful information

For more information you can visit:

[www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts](http://www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts)

[www.bapen.org.uk](http://www.bapen.org.uk)

# Notes

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## Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS)

You may be able to claim a refund of some travel costs under this scheme. For more information visit the NHS website:

[www.nhs.uk/nhsengland/healthcosts/pages/travelcosts.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/nhsengland/healthcosts/pages/travelcosts.aspx)

## Alternative Formats

If you would like a copy of this information in large print, easy read, another language, audio tape or other format please call the Contact Centre on 03 44 811 8118.



British Sign Language users can use InterpretersLive! a service provided by Sign Solutions. This helps Deaf people to access BSL interpreters, and other communication professionals at any time. More information can be found on our website or by scanning the QR code to the left.

## Other sources of information

### NHS 111

### NHS Choices

[www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/pages/homepage.aspx)

### NICE (National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence)

[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

### Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

Freephone: 0800 032 0202

Email: [northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk](mailto:northoftynepals@nhct.nhs.uk)

### Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

General Enquiries 03 44 811 8111

[www.northumbria.nhs.uk](http://www.northumbria.nhs.uk)

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