

# Eating well, feeling good



This leaflet has been given to you because you have experienced unplanned weight loss or are underweight

## Why is 'eating well' important?

Eating well is important for everyone. It enables the body to get the right balance of nutrition to work at its best. A person is malnourished, or undernourished, when they have not eaten enough of the right foods to stay healthy. It can lead to illness because the body isn't getting the right nutrition to work properly.

If you are **undernourished**, you are more likely to catch infections, take longer to recover and you are more likely to be admitted to hospital. Undernutrition affects every organ in the body. Your muscles get weaker which can make it more difficult to walk, to swallow or cough. You lose fat which can weaken your skin. Undernutrition also affects the brain, which can cause low mood.

## Who is at risk?

Anyone can be at risk and there are many factors which can cause someone to lose weight or to be underweight, such as:

### Social factors

- Isolation, loneliness
- Work and financial pressures
- Lack of cooking skills
- Difficulty shopping of preparing food
- Lack of knowledge about food and nutrition

### Psychological factors

- Confusion
- Anxiety and depression
- Bereavement

### Physical factors

- Poor appetite
- Illness, recent hospital stay
- Swallowing problems
- Memory loss
- Poorly fitting dentures
- Sickness, nausea and diarrhoea
- Loss of taste and smell
- Dementia



## Tips for eating more

When you are undernourished, or at risk of becoming undernourished, the usual 'healthy eating' guidelines are not what you need. Try the following tips instead:



Eat **small, frequent meals and snacks**, instead of 3 large meals

Introduce **snacks** around your favourite TV programmes



**High calorie snack ideas** include thick and creamy yoghurts, cake, cheese and crackers and buffet foods



Eat foods **high in calories and protein**, e.g. full fat dairy products, meat and fish, nuts

Avoid 'diet' or 'low fat' products



Include **nourishing drinks**, e.g. whole milk, milky coffee, milkshakes, hot chocolate, malted drinks, e.g. Ovaltine, Horlicks



**Fortify food** – add extra calories without increasing the food portion. Example include adding cream to soups and casseroles, or adding butter and cheese to mashed potato

**Fortify your milk** and use this in place of your usual milk. To make fortified milk, simply mix together 4 tablespoons milk powder with 1 pint of whole milk

# Tasty drinks recipes

## Fortified milk

4 tablespoons milk powder  
1 pint of whole milk  
**Mix together**

## Yoghurt & Berry Smoothie

P150ml whole milk  
Small pot of Greek yoghurt  
Handful of frozen berries  
Small banana  
**Blend together**

## Banana milkshake

Small, ripe banana  
Scoop of vanilla ice cream  
1 cup of fortified milk  
Teaspoon of honey  
**Blend together**

## Super Soup

Packet of cup a soup  
200ml warmed whole milk  
4 tablespoons milk powder  
2 tablespoons double cream / grated cheese  
**Mix together and serve warm**

## Shop bought supplements

e.g. Complian and Meritene (made with whole milk)

## Fruit Blast

100ml fresh fruit juice  
100ml lemonade  
1 scoop ice cream  
1 tablespoon sugar  
**Mix together and serve chilled**

# Other things which may help

- Attend social events which include meals, such as lunch clubs
- Your local voluntary sector organisation may be able to offer support with shopping, budgeting, transport or befriending services to help reduce loneliness
- Involve your family and friends, who may be able to provide support such as taking you shopping or ordering food online
- Consider counselling – you may be able to access this through a referral from your GP. Bereavement counselling is offered through various charitable organisations

# Your plan

## Your weight & BMI

Date: ..... Weight: ..... BMI: .....

## The likely cause of your undernutrition is:

.....  
.....

## Your key goals *(tick all that apply)*

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Gain weight     | <input type="checkbox"/> Fortify your food  | <input type="checkbox"/> Milky drinks                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain weight | <input type="checkbox"/> High energy snacks | <input type="checkbox"/> See GP for a medical review |

## Other advice

.....

## If you are struggling to follow this advice or are still losing weight, please contact:

Name: .....

Telephone: .....



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