

Patient information

Dietary Advice for Diabetes and a Poor Appetite

Therapies Speciality

This leaflet is designed for those diagnosed with diabetes and have had unintentional weight loss and/or are experiencing a poor appetite. The advice will provide information on preventing weight loss while still keeping your blood glucose levels (also referred to as blood sugar levels) under control.

This is a temporary measure until your appetite improves. You should return to a healthy eating diet suitable for diabetes when you feel able/when your appetite improves.

To increase your energy and protein intake, yet keep good control of your blood glucose control, it is important to choose foods that are high in energy and protein but low in sugar.

Blood glucose levels can go up during illness or infection, even when your diet is low in sugar. Checking your blood glucose levels may therefore be important. You may need to discuss your blood glucose readings with your diabetes Nurse Specialist or a Doctor to alter your medication.

Handy Day To Day Tips

- Eat little and often: try two to three snacks daily as well as three small meals.
- Eat the foods that you want and treat yourself to a favourite food more often.
- Take some light exercise such as walking or try to get some fresh air before mealtimes.
- If you cannot face large meals, try having your meals on a side plate- you can always go back for more.
- Avoid low fat versions of food such as skimmed and semi skimmed milk and low fat yoghurts.

Good Food Guide

Try to include the following

Starchy Carbohydrates

Starchy carbohydrates should be included at each main meal as they help to control your blood glucose levels.

Examples include; unsweetened cereal, potatoes, rice, pasta, couscous and bread.

Protein

- Foods which contain the most protein are meat, fish, eggs, cheese, yoghurt, nuts, beans and pulses e.g. lentils.
- Have at least two helpings from this group each day.

Fruit and Vegetables

- Eat some fruit and vegetables every day. Use fresh, tinned, frozen or dried fruit and vegetables.
- Spread fruit portions out throughout the day rather than having all at once as this will increase blood sugars.

Fluid

- It is important to keep hydrated.
- Aim for at least six to eight glasses a day.
- Drinks can also be a good source of energy and protein. See “Nourishing Drink” ideas.
- Try taking drinks after meals, not with meals.

Ways to Enrich Food

Milk

- Try to use full fat milk (blue, silver or gold top).
- Aim to have a pint of milk each day.
- Adding dried milk powder to milk will increase the protein and energy content further.
 - Add two to four tablespoons of dried milk powder to one pint of milk and use as normal – for example in tea, coffee, milky drinks, on cereal, in sauces and puddings.
- Add milk-based sauces (for example cheese sauce) to meals.
- Try to have milky puddings regularly, for example rice pudding, custard, ice cream.

Cheese

- Add to meals, for example add grated cheese to mashed or jacket potato, on soup, beans and pasta, in omelette or scrambled egg.
- As a snack for example cheese and biscuits.
- Add cheese sauce to vegetables.

Butter/Margarine

- Put butter or margarine on vegetables and potatoes.
- Spread thickly on bread, toast, crumpets or teacakes, biscuits and crackers.

Cream

- Add cream to soups, mashed potato, milk puddings, cake, or pour over cereals and desserts.
- Add to hot drinks.

Nourishing Drinks

- Make up hot drinks with hot milk instead of water, e.g. coffee, cocoa or lower sugar drinking chocolate such as options/highlights.
- Drink fresh milk or fortified milk between meals.
- Liquidise or whisk plain ice cream with fresh (or fortified) milk.
- Liquidise soft fresh fruit or tinned fruit with milk or ice cream.
- Dilute fruit yoghurt with fresh milk or fortified milk to make a yoghurt drink.
- Chemists and supermarkets sell enriched drinks such as Complan and Meritene (formally known as Build-Up) in sweet and savoury flavours. These are best taken in addition to your meals.
- If you start to take Complan or Meritene or a nutritional supplement from your dietitian or doctor and your blood glucose levels start to increase you should speak to your diabetes specialist nurse, diabetes dietitian or doctor.

Snack and Meal Ideas

Meals

- If not able to cook, use chilled or frozen ready meals, which just need reheating in oven or microwave (ensure cooking instructions are followed).
- Use tinned soup or puddings.
- Make up meals with more than one high protein food, for example add tinned beans to stews, ham and cheese omelette, jacket potato with tuna and cheese.
- Try adding olive oil or a dressing to salads.

Sandwiches and toast

- Filling suggestions: cold meat, bacon, tuna, salmon, hard-boiled egg, cheese or peanut butter.
- Add butter, mayonnaise, sour cream, coleslaw, humous or guacamole to increase energy content.
- Try toast with meats, pilchards, mackerel, beans, cheese, or tinned spaghetti.
- Try to have two high protein foods e.g. cheese and beans, ham and cheese.

Snacks

Try to have a snack between each meal to increase your energy intake.

Ideas include

- Unsweetened bowl of cereal.
- Plain or digestive biscuits or crackers with butter, cheese, or marmalade.
- Malt loaf, plain sponge cake or oat biscuits.
- Toasted crumpets or teacakes with butter, cheese, peanut butter or pate.
- Fruit or Cheese scone with butter, cheese or cream.
- Crisps, popcorn, Bombay mix.
- Handful of nuts.
- Yoghurts (per 100g <10g of added sugar).
- Small piece of cake.
- Cream cake.

Desserts

- Plain sponge puddings with cream or evaporated milk.
- Cheesecake.
- Mousse or trifle.
- Rice pudding, custard or trifle.
- Cream cakes.
- Plain ice cream.
- Small piece of fruit cake.
- Cheese and crackers.
- One portion of tinned or stewed fruit with custard or cream.

Small and Often Meal Plan Suggestions

Breakfast

- Cooked breakfast items such as: egg, bacon, mushroom, sausage, tomato, and beans.
- Unsweetened cereal with fortified milk or cream.
- Toast plus butter, cheese or peanut butter.

Mid-morning snack

- Milky drink with a snack (see snack section).

Lunch

- Soup, bread and butter.
- Sandwiches or toasted sandwiches.
- Cheese, beans or spaghetti on toast.
- Jacket potato with beans.
- Salad with pasta and coleslaw.

Mid-afternoon snack

- Milky drink with a snack (see snack section).

Evening Meal

- Meat, fish or vegetarian alternative with potato, rice or pasta and vegetables.
- Stew with potatoes.
- Soup with bread and butter.
- Oven chips and fish.
- Pasta bake with cheese on top.
- Curry with naan bread.

Dessert

- Fruit or cake and custard.
- Cheesecake.
- Trifle.
- Plain Ice Cream.
- Rice Pudding or custard.

Supper

- Cheese and crackers.
- Two digestive biscuits.
- Slice of toast with cream cheese.
- Banana with custard.
- Warm milky drink.

What will I do?

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Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated.

Further information

The Royal Liverpool University Hospital Dietitians

Tel: 0151 706 2120

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Broadgreen Hospital Dietitians

Tel: 0151 282 6473

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