

Eating for a Small Appetite when you have Diabetes

Patient Information Leaflet

Introduction

If your appetite is poor or you have lost a significant amount of weight, it is important to have a nourishing diet.

This guide is designed to help those with diabetes to increase their dietary intake whilst still aiming for optimal blood glucose control.

If your dietitian recommends a fortified diet, she may recommend that you increase your intake of high fat foods. These are a good source of calories and energy so will not need to be restricted.

The best way to improve your dietary intake is to make simple changes:

- Try eating small, frequent meals and snacks rather than 3 larger meals each day.
- Meal and drinks should be high in calories and protein to meet your daily requirements.
- Extra calories can be added to drinks, snacks and meals to make them more nutritious.
- Try to encourage yourself with your favourite foods.

A nourishing diet for diabetes

All foods contain calories although certain foods are higher in calories and protein.

These include fats, oils and cream, cheese, eggs and full fat dairy.

Starchy foods such as bread, potatoes, pasta, rice and breakfast cereals can also be useful for weight gain.

- Try to fill up on the higher calorie foods before eating, the foods which contain fewer calories.
- If trying to gain weight, do not use low fat or light spreads and dairy products. Use full fat varieties.
- Use full fat spreads i.e. butter thickly spread on toast/sandwiches.
- Melt full fat spreads, grated cheese or cream into potatoes, rice, pasta and on vegetables.
- Try to use frying/roasting/cooking methods more often than grilling/boiling/steaming
- Double cream can be added to soups, sauces or puddings. You may also use it as a topping for fruit and cereals.
- Dried fruit can be added to cereal or milk puddings or eaten as a snack. A matchbox size portion is recommended as too much can affect your blood glucose levels
- Drink plenty of fluids. Sipping a sugar free or diet fizzy drink is a popular remedy for feeling sick
- Speak to your doctor to prescribe anti-sickness medication if nausea persists
- Have plenty of fresh air in the room.

Feeling full very quickly

- Eat little amounts frequently
- Drink fluids separately to meals
- Make meals as attractive as possible
- Eat well when you feel well – make the most of the times when you do feel hungry
- Have nourishing drinks and have these separately to your meal times
- Add butter/cheese/sugar/milk powder/cream to foods

Remember, if you feel unwell, it is important to continue to take your diabetes medications/insulin even if your sugar intake is low.

Illness can cause a rise in blood glucose levels so you still need to take your treatment. Sometimes your doctor or dietitian may prescribe nutritional supplements to help to increase your nutritional intake.

Although they contain sugar, they are fine in the quantities recommended. If your blood glucose levels rise due to increasing your food intake, you may need to contact your diabetes team/GP in case your medication needs adjusting.

If you still continue to struggle with a poor appetite and weight loss and problems persist, please contact your doctor or dietitian who can give your further advice.

Common problems associated with poor appetite

People with poor appetite often suffer from feeling tired, sick or nauseous and feeling full very quickly. Here are some tips to help you get the most out of your diet.

Feeling too tired to eat

- Get help with cooking and shopping.
- Have frozen meals, tinned foods and convenience foods to hand.

- Use quick and easy recipes.
- Eating a little and often will stop you getting breathless during meals.
- When you have the energy, cook more meals than you need and freeze them so that they are easily accessed if you feel unwell.
- Consider having meals on wheels (Social Services department can advise you on this).
- Wiltshire Farm Foods and Oakhouse Foods deliver meals to your home (ask your doctor or dietitian for details)

Feeling sick and nauseous

- Have something dry like a piece of toast, ginger biscuit or cracker when you wake up.
- Try and be as upright as possible when eating and drinking
- Avoid spicy and greasy foods
- Try cold foods and drinks so that cooking smells do not linger and put you off eating

Meal ideas

Breakfast ideas:

Breakfast cereal with full fat milk and fresh or dried fruit. If using porridge, cream can also be added for enhancing flavour and adding calories. Sweetener can also be added for flavour.

Fried, boiled, scrambled or poached egg on buttered toast.

Toast, croissant or bagel spread thickly with full fat butter or margarine and a thin scraping of jam, marmalade or honey.

French toast/eggy bread.

Light meals:

Soups can be fortified with cream, full cream milk or grated cheese. Beans and lentils can also be added to soups and

casseroles and eaten with a soft roll and butter.

Omelette or scrambled egg with grated cheese.

Sandwich or bread roll filled with egg, tuna, cream cheese, meat or poultry. Use full fat margarine or butter and spread thickly.

Toasted sandwich with egg, cheese, tuna or salmon. Add full fat mayonnaise, chutney, salad creams or dressings.

Jacket potatoes with butter, tuna, cheese or baked beans.

Nourishing drinks

It is important to have nourishing drinks when you have a poor appetite. Drinks such as tea, coffee, water and clear soups have very little nutritional value and tend to fill you up.

Try to drink nourishing fluids between meals.

Try some of the following suggestions:

- Full cream milk (milk can also be fortified with 2-4 tablespoons of skimmed milk powder to add calories and nutrition)
- Milky coffee/latte
- Ovaltine
- Low sugar hot chocolate
- All the above can be made with full cream milk. Cream can also be added to your drinks to add extra calories.

Nourishing snacks

Below are some ideas for quick and easy snacks to have in between meals. Try to include a pudding or snack twice a day. Choose from the following ideas:

Savoury

- Bowl of cereal with milk.
- Cheese, baked beans, sardines or egg on toast.

- Cheese and crackers with butter or margarine.
- Sandwiches (i.e. ham, cheese, and fish).
- Creamy soup with croutons and buttered roll.
- Baked potatoes with baked beans, cheese, fish or egg.
- Omelette with meat, cheese, tomato.
- Cream cheese on crumpets, bagels, muffins or pitta bread.
- Potato crisps, corn or maize snacks.
- Savoury pancakes.
- Nuts or fruit and nut mixtures

Sweet

- Yoghurt/fromage frais/mousse or any other individual pot dessert (check there are no more than 10g total carbohydrates per 100g).
- Low sugar milk puddings, such as rice pudding, custard, semolina, tapioca, instant whip.
- Scone, teacake, fruit loaf, malt loaf, crumpets or muffins topped with butter or cheese.
- Low sugar biscuits such as digestive, rich tea, oat or ginger.



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Tel No: 0151 529 2906

Email: interpretationandtranslation@liverpoolft.nhs.uk