



# Build Yourself Up

## A patient's guide

### Why is it important to eat well?

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A good diet is one that provides you with everything you need to keep your **body working well**. When you don't eat enough food you will lose weight and be less able to fight infection.

Patients who continue to eat well even when they are ill are more likely to:

- Minimise weight loss.
- Keep up their strength.
- Better tolerate treatment and recover quicker if they have surgery.
- Withstand the stress of illness & fight infections.

### What does 'eating well' mean?

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Eating well means having a **balanced diet** with enough variety of foods to give you adequate amounts of protein, energy (calories) from carbohydrate and fat, vitamins, minerals, and fibre.

It is important to make sure that you have enough energy from your food choices, especially if you have a low body weight, to prevent losing muscle and fat.

Foods rich in protein are important for growth and repair of body tissues and are particularly important after surgery or when injured, ill or under stress, in order to repair any damage.

### When you don't feel like eating or feel full very quickly

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A loss of appetite may be due to many different factors. For example, the treatment you are receiving, your lifestyle, worry and/or anxiety. When you do feel like eating, make the most of it, don't wait for meal times. The following may help:

- Try the little and often approach to eating your meals. Eat smaller meals more frequently - it may be easier to manage several 'snacks' 5 or 6 times per day in place of a full meal.
- Concentrate on having your favourite foods.
- Small amounts of high fat foods provide a good source of energy.
- Cold foods such as sandwiches, quiches or breakfast cereals can be just as nourishing as a hot meal.
- Eat slowly and relax after meals.
- Have nourishing milky drinks, (e.g., milky coffee, Ovaltine, Horlicks, drinking chocolate, Complan, Build Up) in-between meals. Avoid long drinks especially at meal times as these make you feel over full.
- Try having your drinks after meals, rather than having them before or during. You may find this helps you to finish more of your meal.



## Food fortification

Food fortification helps to increase your overall intake of energy and protein. Below are examples of foods which are 100 calories. Adding 5 of these to your diet every day, either on their own or added to other foods, can help to promote weight gain.

### Sweet options

- 1 small pot of full fat yoghurt
- 2 scoops of ice cream
- 1 ½ tablespoons of double cream
- 2 tablespoons of lemon curd
- 1 heaped tablespoon of sugar
- 2 tablespoons of condensed milk
- 2 tablespoons of golden syrup
- 2 tablespoons of honey



### Savoury Options:

- 2 cubes of butter
- 1 tablespoon of oil
- 1 tablespoon of mayonnaise
- A small handful of grated cheese
- 2 heaped tablespoons of dried milk powder
- 2 tablespoons of salad cream
- 1 tablespoon of peanut butter
- 2 tablespoons of hummus



### Snacks and drinks

- 1 banana
- 3 cubes of milk chocolate
- 1 shortbread finger
- 2 digestive biscuits
- A small handful of nuts or dried fruit
- 1 bag of crisps
- 5 jelly babies
- 1 slice of malt loaf
- 3 cream crackers
- 200ml of orange juice
- 250ml of regular cola
- 150ml of full fat milk



For any further advice please contact your GP who may refer you to the community dietitian.

### Patient advice and liaison service (PALS)

If you have a compliment, complaint or concern please contact our PALS team on 020 7288 5551 or [whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net](mailto:whh-tr.PALS@nhs.net)

If you need a large print, audio or translated copy of this leaflet please email [whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net](mailto:whh-tr.patient-information@nhs.net). We will try our best to meet your needs.

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