

Good Food First – Making the most of your food

There are some simple things you can do to improve your diet if you have a poor appetite or need to gain some weight.

Eat little and often

Aim for 3 small meals a day with snacks and nutritious drinks in between.

Some suitable snacks include:

- Toast
- Sandwich
- Desserts
- Cakes and biscuits
- Ice cream
- Soup
- Chocolate
- Cereal and milk
- Creamy yoghurt
- Cheese and biscuits

Use fortified milk

To make fortified milk, add 2-4 tablespoons of skimmed milk powder to full cream milk. Aim to use one pint of this each day. You can use fortified milk just as you would use your usual milk in:

- Milky coffee
- Tea
- Milk pudding/custard
- Milkshakes
- Bedtime drinks, e.g. malted milk, hot chocolate
- Porridge
- Fruit smoothies
- Jelly
- Breakfast cereal
- Instant soup

Enrich your food

Add calories to your food with:

Butter or margarine: Add to potato, vegetables, sauces, rice, pasta.

Cheese: Add to potato, vegetables, salad, soup, sauces.

Cream: Add to puddings, porridge, cereal, soup, mashed potato, scrambled egg.

Sugar and Honey: Add to cereals, puddings, custard, porridge, stewed fruit.

Some sugary and sweet foods may not be suitable if you have diabetes. Please check with your nurse or doctor.

Helpful hints

- Avoid low fat/reduced calorie products and use full fat/full calorie products instead, e.g. full fat milk, full fat cheese, full fat margarine and butter, thick and creamy yoghurts.
- Large meals tend to be 'off-putting', so try to eat 5 or 6 small, nutritious meals or snacks regularly throughout the day instead.
- Convenience food and ready made meals may be useful if you are finding cooking difficult or tiring.
- Smoking can reduce your appetite. If you do smoke, try not to smoke in the half hour before your meal. If you wish to give up phone Stop Smoking Wales for advice on 0800 085 2219.
- A drink before a meal can fill you up – have a drink after your meal instead.
- A small glass of wine or sherry or a measure of a spirit in the half hour before a meal can stimulate your appetite. Alcohol should not be taken with some medications. Check with your doctor or nurse.

If you continue to lose weight or require further advice please contact your GP, District Nurse or Dietitian. Once your weight and appetite have improved sufficiently, a healthier diet should be considered.