



Build Yourself Up

Advice on increasing your intake of energy and protein

Eating well

Eating well during illness is important to help keep your strength up and make you better able to fight infections or cope with your medical treatment.

A healthy diet means that you need to eat a variety of foods. Each meal should consist of some starchy carbohydrates (bread/cereal/potatoes/rice/pasta), greens (vegetables/salad/fruit) and protein (meats/fish/dairy/egg products) to ensure it is balanced.

Aim to eat regular meals with snacks in between; skipping meals means that you will not get enough nutrition. Also aim to drink sufficient fluids, 6-8 glasses per day.

The table below gives some guidance how much to eat from each food group:

Food Group	Portion sizes	How much
Starchy carbohydrates	Bread (1 slice) Potato (1 medium) Rice (1 cup cooked)	2 or more portions at each meal
Fruit and vegetables	Apple/pear/banana (1 medium) Plums (2 small) Grapes (1 handful) Cooked vegetables (2-3 tablespoons) Salad (1 bowl)	5 portions a day
Dairy	Milk (1 cup) Cheese (1oz) Yoghurt (1 small pot)	3 portions a day
Meat and meat alternatives	Red Meat (2oz) Poultry (3oz) Fish (4oz)	2 portions a day
Fats and sugars	Spreads/ butter/ oils Sugar, jam, honey	have as needed –provides extra calories and no other nutrients

Eating to build yourself up

Choosing foods that are high in protein and calories help to improve your nutritional intake. This helps to maintain your weight or achieve some weight gain. This is especially useful where portions at mealtimes might have reduced a little.

Aim to eat little but often by including nourishing snacks in between meals. You should therefore aim to have something to eat every 2 - 3hours.

Drinking calorific drinks such as hot chocolate or malted drinks made with milk also increases your nutrition intake.

Good sources of protein

Meat, Poultry, Fish, Eggs, Cheese, Beans and Lentils

- Try to have these at 2 meals per day
- Serve with plenty of sauce (e.g. gravy) for extra calories
- Try tinned fish in oil, rather than brine, for extra calories
- Add beans and pulses to soups, stews and casseroles
- Eat plenty of eggs

Milk and Dairy

- Have at least 1 pint of milk per day, full-fat is best
- Fortify your milk by adding 4 heaped tablespoons (2oz/56g) milk powder per pint. (Mix powder with a little milk to make a runny paste first, then add the rest). Keep in the fridge
- Milky drinks, e.g. milky coffee, milkshakes, hot chocolates, malted milk drinks can make nourishing snacks. If you have diabetes, choose sugar-free/or low-sugar varieties
- Evaporated milk can be added to porridge, puddings, sauces and soups
- Choose milky pudding, e.g. custards, rice puddings, thick and creamy yoghurt, Instant Whips or use yoghurt/cream with your puddings or fruit
- Sprinkle grated cheese on potatoes, vegetables, soups, sauces, baked beans and eggs
- Have cheese and biscuits as a between-meal snack

Good sources of calories / energy

Butter, Margarine, Oils - Add plenty to potatoes, vegetables and pasta. Spread liberally on breads, crackers and scones etc.

Cream - Stir into soups, sauces, puddings and drinks. Pour into fruit and desserts.

Sauces - Use mayonnaise/salad cream in sandwiches or with chips.

If not Diabetic, also consider the following:

Sugar - Use plenty in drinks, puddings, on breakfast cereals.

Honey, Jam, Marmalade, Golden Syrup, Treacle - Spread generously on bread, biscuits, scones, etc. Add to milky puddings and cereals. Try honey in Greek yoghurt /porridge.

Chocolate, Cakes and Biscuits - Have them as well as, not instead of your meals.

Puddings - Buy fruit in syrup, rather than in juice, for extra calories. Serve with generous helpings of cream, ice cream, yoghurt or custard

Drinks - Use 'ordinary' squash and fizzy drinks. Have plenty of milky drinks

Alcohol - if your doctor has no objections, a small glass of alcohol may help to stimulate your appetite

Snack ideas - Aim to have 3 nourishing snacks/nourishing drinks per day in-between your meals.

Try the following high protein/calorie snacks:

Mini pizza, Samosas, Pork pie, Corned beef, Pasties, Sausage roll, Sausages, Pate, Fatty meat, Mackerel (or other oily fish), Cheese, Scampi (or other battered/ fried fish), Nuts, Crisps, Pork scratching, Crackers, Cheese straws, Chocolate biscuits

If not Diabetic, also consider the following:

Pastry cakes, Cream horns, Custard tarts, Danish pastries, Doughnuts, Eccles cake, Eclairs, Greek pastries, Mince pies, Jam tarts, Scotch pancakes, Pie with filling, Christmas pudding, Lemon meringue pie, Scone and jam, Sponge pudding, Treacle tart, Milk pudding, Cheesecake, Choc ice, Cornetto ice cream, Instant dessert, Mousse, Thick and creamy yoghurt, Trifle with cream, Victoria sponge with butter icing, Swiss roll, Custard, Nut spread, Chocolate nut spread, Chocolate, Flapjacks, Custard creams, Shortbread

Nourishing drinks

When your appetite is poor and you are unable to eat meals or snack, then taking a nourishing drink can be beneficial.

Commercially available nutritional drinks as **Build-up Shake** or **Complan** are widely available in sweet and savoury flavours to purchase and make up at home.

A variety of high energy and protein products are also available on prescription. Your Dietitian will advise you if these are necessary.

Here are some nourishing drink recipes you can prepare at home:

Fortified Milk - 1 pint (500ml) full fat milk and 2oz/50g skimmed milk powder. Gradually mix the milk into the powder, whisk with a fork until the powder has dissolved. Store in the fridge.

Milk Shake - ½ pint fortified milk, 1 scoop of ice cream, milkshake flavouring or soft fruit, e.g. banana, strawberries. Whisk all ingredients in a blender and serve chilled. Strain if any seeds from fruit visible.

Yoghurt Flip - 1 glass full fat or fortified milk, 1 carton fruit yoghurt, sugar to taste. Whisk together and serve chilled.

Honey Cup - ½ pint (250 ml) fortified milk (warmed), 2 teaspoons honey. Put honey in a cup and pour on the warm milk, stirring well.

Chocomint Delight - ½ pint (250 ml) fortified milk, 2-4 heaped teaspoons drinking chocolate, peppermint essence, grated chocolate to decorate. Mix the drinking chocolate and peppermint flavouring with a bit of milk. Add the remainder of the milk, stirring well. Pour into a glass and grate chocolate on top.

Store cupboard ideas

Some days you may not be able to go shopping, either due to your illness. It is a good idea to keep a stock of basic foods in your cupboard.

Food Group	
Starchy carbohydrates	Tinned spaghetti, crackers, crispbreads, breakfast cereals, cereal bars, pasta, rice, biscuits, tinned or packet potatoes
Fruit and vegetables	Tinned varieties e.g. beans, soups, fruit, dried fruit, lentils, packet soups
Dairy	Long life (UHT) milk, dried milk powder, evaporated milk, long life cream
Meat/fish/chicken	Tinned varieties e.g. tuna, pilchards, salmon, sardines, ham, pork, corned beef, stewed meat in gravy, chicken in white sauce
Drinks	Squash, drinking chocolate, malted drinks, long life fruit juice
Desserts	Jelly, milk puddings, custard, packet mousse, condensed milk, cakes
Others	Jam, honey, sugar, golden syrup, sweets, chocolate, peanut butter, syrup, crisps, nuts, cheesy crackers

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