



## 'Food First' 3-2-1: Eating Well for Small Appetites

### What is the reason I need this advice?

Maintaining a healthy body weight and not becoming too thin is important. If you are under weight, or have lost weight without wanting to, you may be at risk of malnutrition. Many older people or people with some long-term conditions are at risk of malnutrition because they cannot, or do not, eat enough food to meet their body's needs.

Malnutrition increases risk of illness and makes it harder for the body to fight infection and heal itself, so it will take longer to recover from any illness. Malnutrition can also reduce energy levels, muscle strength, mobility and can weaken the heart.

To treat malnutrition our bodies need us to increase the amount of protein and energy (calories) which we eat every day.

To stop losing weight and/or to help regain weight generally we need to eat at least extra 500 calories per day. See page 6 for a quick guide to increasing intake by 500 calories a day.

To increase protein intake we need to choose snacks and drinks containing protein, as well as eat protein foods at meals.

Treating and preventing malnutrition can be simple, and in the majority cases it can be achieved with normal foods – this approach is known 'Food First'. Food first just means using ordinary everyday foods to increase intake of all the nutrients your body needs. The following advice will help you to do this.

### What about healthy eating?

When someone is at risk of malnutrition, 'normal' healthy eating advice does not apply.

People at risk of malnutrition need to follow 'eating for health' advice outlined in this leaflet, which may not be healthy for their family and friends.

Some of the following advice recommends eating some foods that are high in fat. Some people may worry that if they eat more foods higher in fat this will harm their heart. However, malnutrition itself is a big risk factor to heart health, so treating malnutrition can actually help to strengthen the heart.

### What do I need to do to prevent further weight loss/promote weight gain?

The Food First approach involves small modification to your current diet that can help to make sure that you eat enough to meet your body's needs. The Food First approach involves three main elements:

- 3** Aim to eat 3 meals a day that have been fortified (see below) and,
- 2** Aim to have at least 2 high calorie snacks each day (see below) and,
- 1** Aim to use 1 pint of fortified full fat milk each day (see below)

### How can I make mealtime easier?

- Avoid drinks with or shortly before a meal/snack to avoid feeling too full to eat.
- A small alcoholic drink before a meal can help to stimulate your appetite and is also high in energy, but make sure that it is safe to drink with any medication that you are taking.
- Choose foods which you know you enjoy.
- Serve small portion as these can be easier to manage.
- Try to make your meals and snacks look appealing by choosing a variety of colours, flavours and textures.
- If you are a slow eater, give yourself enough time to eat meals and snacks. To keep your food warm while eating try to serve hot food on a warmed plate.
- Try to eat with others as this can help to encourage appetite.
- Try to get some fresh air before mealtime as this can help to encourage appetite.
- If cooking is difficult for you/your carer, try ready prepared meals from supermarket or delivered to your door- Wilshire Farm Foods (0800 773 100), Parsley Box (0800 612 7225), Normandy Dining (07887 590625).
- Try homemade supplements or commercial supplements such as Aymes Retail, Complian, Meritene, Nurishment or NuVu Life between meals, with or instead of snacks.

### 3 Aim to eat three meals a day fortified with small amount of other food items

If you have a small appetite, fortifying foods, by adding extra energy, protein and other nutrients to them, can make it easier for you to eat enough every day. Below are some suggestions on how to fortify foods:

- **Breakfast:**  
Try fortifying cereal/porridge with fortified milk, dried fruit, ground almonds, evaporated milk, cream, jam, honey, syrup or sugar.
- **Bread or toast:**  
Try adding plenty of butter/margarine and jam, lemon curd, nut butter, chocolate spread or cream cheese.
- **Main meals:**  
Try fortifying meat dishes with grated cheese, cream cheese, mayonnaise, skimmed milk powder, butter, cream or milk based sauces.
- **Potato and vegetables**  
Try fortifying with milk based sauces made with fortified milk, grated cheese, cream cheese or butter.
- **Puddings**  
Try serving with custard, condensed milk, ice cream, evaporated milk, cream, honey, jam or syrup.
- **Lighter meals:**  
Try fortifying soup with skimmed milk powder, evaporated milk, grated cheese, cream cheese, ground almonds or cream.
- **Sandwiches**  
Try serving with plenty of mayonnaise, cream cheese, nut butter or butter/margarine in addition to sandwich fillings.

| Food (fortifier)   | Amount                                 | To provide:<br>Energy (kcal) + protein (g) | Use in food and drinks  |
|--|--|--|---|
| <b>Skimmed milk powder</b>                                   | 4 tablespoons per 1 pint full fat milk | 540 kcal + 40g                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cereal</li> <li>• Porridge</li> <li>• Custard</li> <li>• Milk puddings</li> <li>• Sauces &amp; soups</li> <li>• Mash potato</li> <li>• Omelette</li> <li>• Scrambled egg</li> <li>• Cup a soup</li> <li>• Tea, coffee, hot chocolate and malt drinks</li> <li>• Milkshake</li> </ul> |
|  | 1 tablespoon                           | 40 kcal + 4g                               |   |
| <b>Cheese (hard or soft)</b>                                 | 4 tablespoons grated cheddar           | 120 kcal +8g                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scrambled egg</li> <li>• Omelette</li> <li>• Sauces &amp; soups</li> <li>• Mash potato</li> <li>• Pasta/pizza</li> <li>• Cooked vegetables</li> </ul>  |
|  | 1 tablespoon full fat cream cheese     | 35 kcal +1g                                |   |
| <b>Fats (butter, cream, crème fraise, oil or mayonnaise)</b> | 1 teaspoon butter/margarine            | 35 kcal + 0g                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Toast/bread</li> <li>• Beans on toast</li> <li>• Scrambled egg</li> <li>• Sauces</li> <li>• Cooked vegetables</li> <li>• Mash potato</li> <li>• Pasta or rice</li> <li>• Soups</li> <li>• Puddings/cakes</li> </ul>  |
|  | 1 tablespoon oil                       | 120 kcal + 0g                              |   |
|  | 1 tablespoon mayonnaise                | 100 kcal + 0g                              |   |
|  | 1 tablespoon double cream              | 70 kcal + 0.5g                             |   |
| <b>Greek style yogurt (full fat)</b>                         | 2 tablespoons                          | 40 kcal + 2g                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breakfast</li> <li>• Sauces &amp; soups</li> <li>• Mash potato</li> <li>• Dips</li> <li>• Cakes</li> <li>• Fruit</li> <li>• Milkshake</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Ground almonds</b>  | 1 tablespoon                           | 90 kcal + 4g                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cakes</li> <li>• Porridge</li> <li>• Rice pudding</li> <li>• Soups</li> <li>• Mash potato</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Sugars (sugar, jam, honey, syrup, sweet sauces)</b>       | 1 teaspoon sugar, syrup or honey       | 20 kcal + 0g                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cereal</li> <li>• Porridge</li> <li>• Puddings</li> <li>• Glazed vegetables</li> <li>• Milkshake</li> </ul>  |
|  | 1 tablespoon jam or sweet sauce        | 50 kcal + 0g                               |   |

## 2 Aim to have at least 2 high calorie snacks each day

- Even the smallest nourishing snacks can help boost your energy, protein and other nutrient intake.
- Try to choose a variety of different snacks.
- Avoid having snacks too close to mealtimes so you do not feel too full to eat your meal.

### Savoury snacks

| Snack                                       | Energy content | Protein content |
|---|----------------|-----------------|
| 3 cocktail sausages                         | 90 calories    | 3 grams         |
| 1 mini pork pie                             | 190 calories   | 4 grams         |
| 2 mini Scotch egg                           | 100 calories   | 3.5 grams       |
| 1/6 quiche Lorraine                         | 185 calories   | 7 grams         |
| 1 cracker with a small chunk of cheese      | 160 calories   | 8 grams         |
| 1 oat cake with 1 teaspoon of peanut butter | 80 calories    | 2 grams         |
| Quarter (¼) egg mayonnaise sandwich         | 110 calories   | 5.5 grams       |
| Half a slice of bread with pate             | 105 calories   | 2.5 grams       |
| 1 tablespoon of peanuts                     | 120 calories   | 5 grams         |
| 1 small packet of crisps                    | 130 calories   | 1.5 grams       |

### Sweet snacks

| Snack                               | Energy content | Protein content |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 3 squares of milk chocolate         | 108 calories   | 1.5 grams       |
| 1 cream biscuit                     | 60 calories    | 0.5 grams       |
| 1 chocolate biscuit, wrapped        | 120 calories   | 1.5 grams       |
| 1 digestive biscuit                 | 70 calories    | 1 grams         |
| 1 small pot of custard              | 145 calories   | 4 grams         |
| 1 small pot of rice pudding         | 125 calories   | 4 grams         |
| 1 small pot of trifle               | 190 calories   | 2 grams         |
| 1 pot of thick and creamy yogurt    | 140 calories   | 5 grams         |
| 1 crumpet with butter & jam         | 155 calories   | 3 grams         |
| 1 small custard tart                | 240 calories   | 5.5 grams       |
| 1 small flapjack                    | 140 calories   | 2 grams         |
| 1 slice of fruit cake with butter   | 150 calories   | 1.5 grams       |
| 1 slice of malt loaf with butter    | 100 calories   | 2 grams         |
| Half a scone with butter & jam      | 185 calories   | 2.5 grams       |
| Half a toasted teacake butter & jam | 145 calories   | 2.5 grams       |

### **Aim to use 1 pint of fortified full fat milk each day**

- Nourishing drinks can help you stay hydrated and boost your energy and protein intake.
- Milk is nutritious food; it contains a range of nutrients including calories, protein and calcium. If you use skimmed or semi-skimmed milk swap to full fat milk as this adds extra calories.
- Fortifying full fat milk with dried skimmed milk powder makes it even more nutritious. It gives more goodness without increasing the volume. For instructions on how to make fortified milk see below.
- If you use a milk alternative, for example soya, almond, hemp, oat, coconut etc, aim to have 1 pint each day and choose a higher calorie product where possible.
- If you do not like milk try to choose mainly high energy drinks such as fruit juice, smoothies, fizzy drinks or energy drinks.
- If you prefer flavoured drinks try making homemade 'Booster' milkshake (see below). Alternatively over the counter nutritional supplements, such as Aymes Retail, Complan, Meritene Energis or Nurishment, are readily available in supermarkets and pharmacies.

### **How to make fortified milk**

| <b>Ingredients</b>        | <b>Quantity</b>        | <b>Instructions</b>   |
|---------------------------|------------------------|---|
| Full fat (whole) milk     | 1 pint<br>(560ml)      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mix the powder with a small amount of milk to make a paste</li><li>• Whisk in the rest of the milk</li><li>• Keep refrigerated in a covered container. Discard any unused milk after 24 hours</li></ul> |
| Dried skimmed milk powder | 4 tablespoons<br>(60g) |   |

### **How to make homemade 'Booster' milkshake**

| <b>Ingredients</b>                                  | <b>Quantity</b>                 | <b>Instructions</b>   |
|---|---------------------------------|---|
| Full fat (whole) milk                               | One third of pint<br>(170ml)    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Mix the powder with a small amount of milk to form a smooth paste</li><li>• Add the remaining ingredients</li><li>• Whisk well using a hand whisk or mix with a blender</li><li>• Keep refrigerated in a covered container if not using immediately</li><li>• Consume within 24 hours</li></ul> |
| Double cream  | 2 tablespoons<br>(30ml)         |   |
| Dried skimmed milk powder                           | 1 heaped<br>tablespoon<br>(15g) |   |
| Milkshake powder<br>(e.g. Nesquik®) or<br>Ovaltine® | 1 tablespoon<br>(15g)           |   |

### **Putting 'Food First' 3-2-1 into practice – Quick guide to increasing intake by 500 calories per day**

To stop losing weight and/or to help regain weight generally in addition to current intake we need to eat at least extra 500 calories per day.

The following are simple suggestions, which may help you to increase your intake by 500 calories per day. The foods suggested will also help to increase intake of protein, vitamins and minerals.

**In addition to your usual intake, try one of the following every day:**

| <b>If you like milk and milk products</b>   | <b>Total calories: 515</b> |
|---|----------------------------|
| Use fortified milk (see page 5) on cereal & in all cups of tea & coffee                   | 120 calories               |
| Have 2 small snacks in between meals e.g. 1 pot of rice pudding & 1 thick & creamy yogurt | 265 calories               |
| Drink 1 extra glass (200ml) of full fat milk  | 130 calories               |

| <b>If you do not like or cannot take milk and milk products</b>                        | <b>Total calories: 495</b> |
|--|----------------------------|
| Add an extra 2 teaspoon of jam on bread or toast                                       | 40 calories                |
| At your main meal fortify vegetables and potatoes with 3 teaspoons of butter/margarine | 90 calories                |
| Have 2 small snacks in between meals e.g. 1 flapjack & 1 tablespoon of nuts            | 260 calories               |
| Drink 1 extra glass (200ml) of fruit smoothie  | 105 calories               |

| <b>If you prefer sweet flavours</b>  | <b>Total calories: 530</b> |
|--|----------------------------|
| Add 1 teaspoon of honey to your cereal or porridge   | 20 calories                |
| Have a small pudding after lunch or evening meal e.g. ¼ tin fruit in syrup + 2 tablespoons of double cream | 200 calories               |
| Have 2 small snacks in between meals e.g. 1 slice of fruit cake+ butter & 1 digestive biscuit              | 220 calories               |
| Drink 1 extra glass (200ml) of fruit juice   | 90 calories                |

| <b>If you prefer savoury flavours</b>  | <b>Total calories: 540</b> |
|--|----------------------------|
| At your main meal fortify vegetables and potatoes with 1 tablespoon of cheese                        | 30 calories                |
| Have 2 small snacks in between meals e.g. 2 mini Scotch eggs & 1 packet of crisps                    | 230 calories               |
| Drink 1 extra mug (200ml) of instant soup made with hot fortified milk (see page 5) instead of water | 280 calories               |

| <b>If you have a very small appetite</b>  | <b>Total calories: 510</b> |
|---|----------------------------|
| Fortify your main meal with 1 dessertspoon of oil   | 80 calories                |
| Have 3 very small snacks in between meals e.g. 2 cocktails sausages, ½ tub of custard & 1 chocolate biscuit | 250 calories               |
| Drink 1 extra cup (150ml) of hot chocolate (made with fortified milk – see page 5)                          | 180 calories               |