

'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 or Nurishment between meals, with or instead of snacks.

3 Aim to eat three meals a day fortified with small amount of other food items to make them more nutritious

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

1 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

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

How to make homemade 'Booster' milkshake

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

If you like milk and milk products	Total calories: 515
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

If you do not like or cannot take milk and milk products	Total calories: 495
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

If you prefer sweet flavours	Total calories: 530
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

If you prefer savoury flavours	Total calories: 540
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

If you have a very small appetite	Total calories: 510
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