



South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust

Warwickshire Dietetic Service

Ensuring good nutrition and hydration

Information to help people being cared for in their own home receive excellent nutrition and hydration from carers, family and friends.

If someone is frail or housebound, they may need additional help to eat and drink well.

This leaflet contains tips and hints to help improve the food and drink consumed as well as ideas for meals to try.

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How you can help maximise food and fluid intake

Help with shopping

If you do the shopping:

- Agree the shopping list with the person and check which brands they buy.
- Buy foods with the longest shelf life.
- Buy a small supply of tinned and dried foods to keep in the store cupboard to use if you are unable to shop, e.g. beans, meat, fish or stew, dried pasta and rice, long-life milk, yoghurts, milk pudding, tinned fruit or jelly.
- Keep the freezer full - frozen food is as good as fresh.
- Try online shopping with a free delivery slot if you are unable to regularly shop yourself.

Help with cooking

- Most people appreciate homemade food. So if you cook for yourself, make a little extra and bring a meal for them to re-heat the next day.
- Wherever possible, involve the person you care for in meal preparation to help maintain their interest in food. For example, they could peel carrots while sitting in their chair.
- If they are unable to cook, get in a supply of ready meals. Look for ones containing around 400 calories and 15g protein.
- Meal delivery companies such as Oakhouse Foods and Wiltshire Farm Foods provide a wide range of choices that can be heated in the microwave or oven.
- For someone who is unable to use a microwave or oven, hot meals can be delivered on the days you are not available. To sign someone up for the service, call Apetito on 0800 090 3625.
- Look for local community cafes and lunch clubs they could go to on days you are unable to visit or that you could both visit to save you having to cook every day.

Help at meal times

- Wherever possible visit at mealtimes.
- Provide the assistance that is needed. Some may only need food cooking, cutting into smaller pieces or packaging opening. Others may need full assistance to cook and eat.
- Give the person time to eat; they should not be rushed.
- If large meals overwhelm them or they have a small appetite offer $\frac{1}{2}$ sized portions, second helpings and nourishing snacks (see page 5).
- Food should look appetising - try to arrange it carefully on the plate. Find out if they like gravy or sauce over the whole meal or just one item.
- Avoid interruptions to mealtimes to minimise distractions. Toileting or administering medication should be done before or after meals where possible. Switch off the TV if this reduces how much they eat and drink.
- Socialising during mealtimes should be encouraged, but people with difficulties eating and drinking may not want to eat if there are other people around. They may want privacy to avoid embarrassment or loss of dignity. Ask what they prefer.
- Use serviettes, aprons or adult bibs (if required) to protect clothing.
- If you have time to sit and eat a meal with them or can invite them to eat at your home, do so.

Throughout the day

Ensure that cold drinks such as fresh water or squash are on offer at all mealtimes and freely available throughout the day. A flask containing a hot drink or one in an insulated mug will be welcomed by people who cannot lift kettles to make their own.

Make food available and accessible between mealtimes by keeping snacks in small containers on a table next to their chair or bed.

Preparing meals for people who are a healthy weight including vegetarians, people with diabetes and those trying to lose weight

What to offer	<p>Each day meals and snacks should provide:</p> <p>5 portions of fruit, salad and vegetables.</p> <p>A portion of potatoes, bread, rice, pasta, chapatti, noodles or other starchy carbohydrate at each meal. Wholegrain products should be encouraged e.g. high fibre cereals, wholemeal bread.</p> <p>3 portions of low fat milk and dairy products.</p> <p>A portion of poultry, fish, eggs, meat, beans, pulses or other proteins at 2 meals. Oily fish is recommended at least once a week; foods with a high iron content twice a week (beef, or lamb, offal).</p> <p>Use unsaturated fats and oils (e.g. olive or rapeseed oil) where possible.</p> <p>Foods and drink with a high fat or sugar content should be occasional treats.</p> <p>At least 6 cups of fluid a day - water, tea, coffee, squash, soup and juice all count.</p>
Milk	1 pint / 500ml semi skimmed milk each day should be used for beverages and meals.
Breakfast	<p>The following provides a healthy breakfast:</p> <p>Fruit or fruit juice Cereal and milk AND / OR Bread or toast with preserves, butter or unsaturated spread. AND / OR Poached or scrambled egg, grilled bacon. Tomatoes, mushrooms or baked beans. Where a cooked breakfast is eaten, food should not be fried every day.</p>
Snacks (optional)	Fruit, crackers, scotch pancakes, pizza slice, and plain biscuits.
Drinks	Offer a drink with or after each meal. The aim is to have at least 6 cups of fluid a day, preferably more. Water, tea, coffee, squash, soup and juice all count.

Preparing meals for people who are a healthy weight including vegetarians, people with diabetes and those trying to lose weight

Main meal

All main meals should be served with vegetables (frozen, fresh, tinned or salad), and a starchy food (potatoes, rice, pasta, noodles, couscous or bread).

- Bacon and egg with tomatoes and hash browns.
- Sausages or burgers with baked beans and rolls or potatoes.
- Oven ready fish, fish fingers or fish cakes with peas and oven chips.
- Fish in cheese, butter or parsley sauce with new potatoes and vegetables.
- Stew, casserole or chilli with rice or jacket potato.
- Shepherds pie, cottage pie or fish pie.
- Curry or dhal with rice or chapatti.
- Macaroni cheese or lasagne.
- Cauliflower cheese with oven chips.
- Jacket potato with cheese, beans or tuna mayonnaise.
- Corned beef hash and vegetables.
- Ham or cheese omelette with oven chips and salad.
- Ready meals which can be oven cooked or microwaved - look for those containing at least 400 calories and 15g protein.

Lighter meal

- Sandwiches filled with cold meat, tinned fish, cheese, hard boiled egg, bacon or peanut butter, and salad.
- Toast with baked beans, pate, cheese, eggs, pilchards, sardines, ham.
- Ravioli or spaghetti with cheese.
- Jacket potato with tuna, cheese, beans or chilli with coleslaw.
- Salad with meat, fish or egg, with bread or potato.
- Creamy or chunky soup with added meat, fish or beans. Serve with bread and butter. Packet and instant soups do not contain the nutrition needed at a meal.

Desserts

- Fresh fruit.
- Low fat / low sugar yoghurt.
- Stewed, frozen or tinned fruit in juice with custard or ice cream.
- Mousse, crème caramel, egg custard, panna cotta.
- Milk puddings e.g. rice, tapioca, semolina.
- Sponge cake or fruit crumble with custard or ice cream.
- Cheesecake or trifle.

People wanting to reduce their weight may need help to choose a low calorie meal with a suitable dessert option such as fruit or sugar free yogurt.

Preparing meals for people who are underweight or have a poor appetite.

People requiring a texture modified diet should follow the specific advice given to them. If there is any doubt about the suitability of a food, drink or snack, please contact your Speech & Language therapist (SALT) or dietitian for clarification.

Follow the overall advice on the previous pages, with the following adaptations to increase calories and protein.

Breakfast	<p>Full fat or fortified milk (see below) should be used to prepare cereal, porridge and hot drinks.</p> <p>Fry food in oil for a cooked breakfast.</p>
Snacks	<p>Offer at least 2 nutritious snacks daily.</p> <p>For example: teacakes, bagels, scones, crackers or sandwiches with a topping or filling such as cheese, cream cheese, egg or tuna mayonnaise, mackerel pate, hummus or peanut butter.</p> <p>Creamy desserts and yoghurt, fruit with cream or custard.</p>
Milk	<p>A minimum of 1 pint / 500ml full fat or fortified milk is recommended. Use in drinks, desserts and on cereal.</p> <p>To fortify milk add 3 - 4 tablespoons of milk powder to 500ml of milk.</p>
Main meal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To increase calories: add high calorie ingredients such as oil, cream cheese and butter. For example sprinkle extra cheese on cottage pie, toss vegetables in oil and add cream to custard.• To provide protein, ensure a portion of meat, fish, eggs, lentils, nuts, cheese or yoghurt is offered at each meal.• Ready meals - look for those containing more than 400 calories and 15g protein. Mini meals that are a small portion, but high in calories and protein are available.
Desserts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sponge, fruit pie or crumble are high in calories. Serve with cream or custard made with fortified milk.• Milk puddings made with fortified milk. Serve with stewed fruit or jam.• These can also be given at snack time.
Lighter meal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add mayonnaise or salad cream, pickles or relish.• Use a thick spread of full-fat margarine or butter.• Try pastry and other high calorie sides such as pie, quiche, samosa, scotch egg and coleslaw.• Crisps, olives and other savoury snacks can be offered as well.
Drinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer at least 6 drinks a day.• Milky drinks are nourishing and a good choice between meals.• For people with a small appetite, offer sips of a drink with meals, but delay giving a full drink until after meals as these may fill people up before they have finished eating.

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Weight Loss

If you are concerned that someone is losing too much weight, use this self-screening tool to identify if the amount of weight lost is a cause for concern www.malnutritionselfscreening.org.

If there is a problem, ask their doctor, to check their Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool (MUST) score. MUST is a screening tool for malnutrition risk used by the NHS and care homes. If the person you care for has been identified at risk, the person carrying out the assessment should give them information about changes that can be made to improve what they eat and drink.

Difficulty Swallowing

If there are concerns regarding swallowing, a referral to a Speech and Language Therapist (SALT) may be appropriate. This may be done by the person themselves, their doctor, community nurse (if they have one) or other professionals involved in their care.

The SALT can assess and manage difficulty with swallowing. They may advise on changes to the consistency of food or drink, or strategies that may help to increase the safety or ease of swallowing. If changes are made to food or fluid consistencies, information leaflets and advice specific to the individual will be provided to ensure you can follow the advice given.

Problems using cutlery or cups

Adaptive cutlery, plate guards or beakers can help people who have difficulty using standard plates, cups, forks and spoons. These can be found online or an Occupational Therapist can advise.



You could offer finger food to those who have difficulty using cutlery. For ideas of finger foods to offer, use the Caroline Walker Trust booklet called Eating well: Supporting older people and older people with dementia: Practical guide www.cwt.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/EW-Old-Dementia-Practical-Resource.pdf

Special diets due to a medical condition

If the person you care for is on a special diet due to a medical condition and you are not sure what to give them, ask their GP or other health care professional to refer them to a dietitian.

Further Information

You will be able to find information sheets relating to a variety of special diets on the South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust (SWFT) web site: Go to www.swft.nhs.uk/our-services/adults-out-hospital-services/dietetics/patient-information-leaflets-and-related-link

The SWFT web site also contains information on how to refer to Dietitians and SALT.

Equality Statement

At South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust we are fully committed to equality and diversity, both as an employer and as a service provider. We have a policy statement in our Equality Strategy that clearly outlines our commitment to equality for service users, patients and staff:

You and your family have the right to be treated fairly and be routinely involved in decisions about your treatment and care. You can expect to be treated with dignity and respect. You will not be discriminated against on any grounds including age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation.

You have a responsibility to treat other service users, patients and our staff with dignity and respect.

Our information for patients can also be made available in other languages, Braille, audio tape, disc or in large print.

PALS

We offer a Patient Advice Liaison Service (PALS). This is a confidential service for families to help with any questions or concerns about local health services.

You can contact the service by the direct telephone line on 01926 600 054 by email:

Pals@swft.nhs.uk or by calling in person to the PALS Office which is located in the Lakin Road entrance to the hospital.

If you have any queries about your diet, please contact us on 01926 600818 option 3:

Dietetic Department
George Eliot Hospital
Nuneaton

Dietetic Department
Warwick Hospital
Warwick

Author	Registered Dietitian
Department	Dietetics
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