

## Patient information

# Nutrition and recovery

Admission to hospital can be accompanied by a poor appetite and weight loss. This is especially true following prolonged hospital admissions, major surgery or for those with ongoing health conditions. Getting home and feeling better is often enough to improve your appetite and regain the strength and weight lost during illness or infection. You may find the following information helpful while you are in hospital.

***If you have received nutritional advice during your hospital stay from a Dietitian, please continue to follow that advice when you go home.***

### While you are in hospital

The hospital catering service provides nutritious meals, freshly prepared on site. If you have any special dietary requirements please inform the ward staff, so special menus can be provided if necessary.

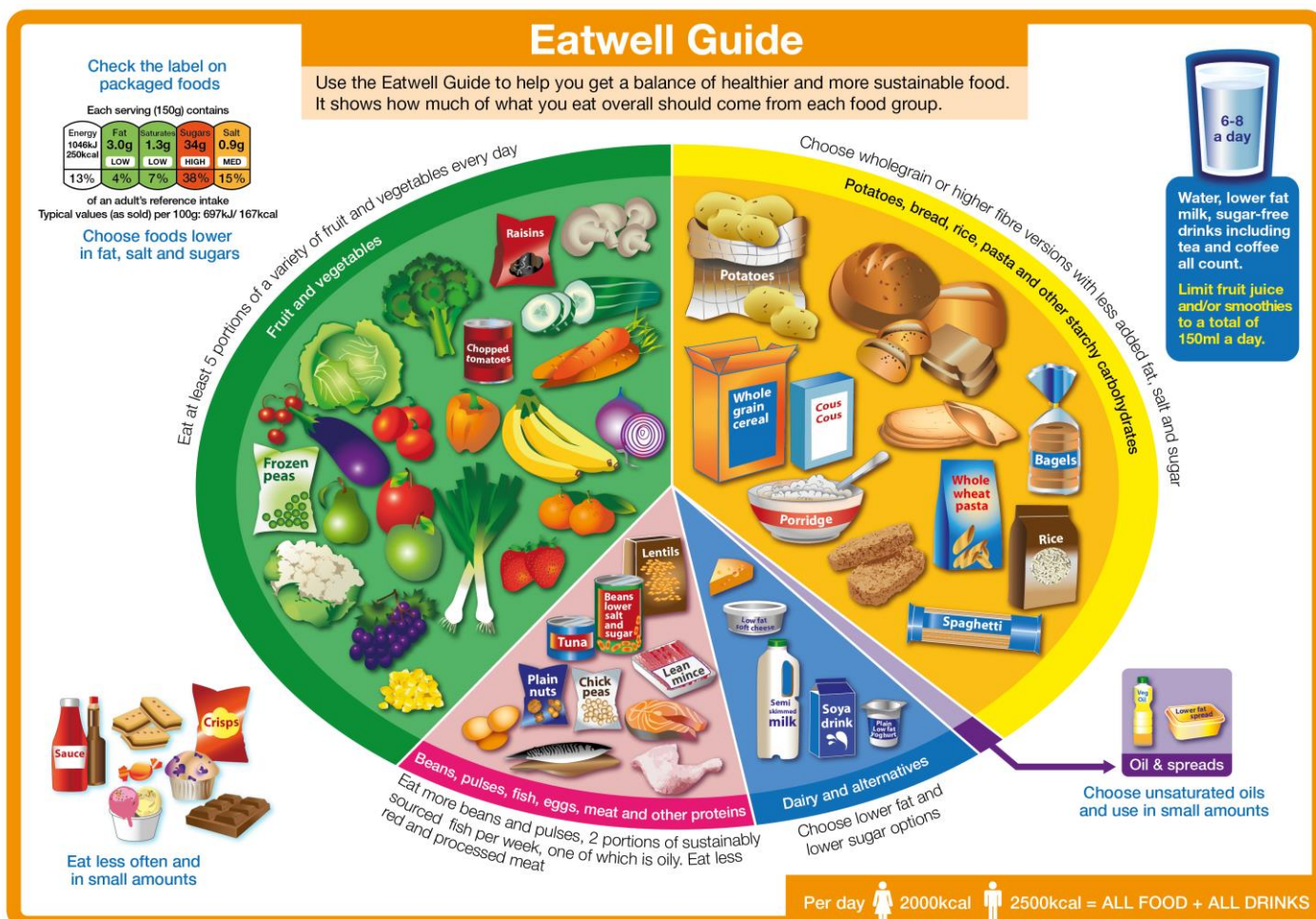
Ticking the 'enriched' box at the top of the normal menus will enable the catering staff to send you higher calorie / protein versions of the meals and snacks where possible. The small, normal or large portion sizes on your menu caters for varying appetites.

Additional snacks such as biscuits or cake can be ordered, by choosing them from the hospital menus. Tea and coffee will be offered at regular intervals during the day, on request you may have a glass of milk instead to provide extra protein and calories.

Favourite foods from home are always appreciated if visitors can bring them in. Please be aware that foods requiring refrigeration could be accommodated, but please check with the ward staff first.

# Can I continue to eat well and gain weight when I have a small appetite?

Of course! Following a balanced diet will ensure you are getting a variety of nutrients important for recovery and wellbeing. A balanced diet includes eating foods from each food group.



## Try to include the following:

- 3 small meals per day as well as 2 - 3 snacks or milky drinks
- Use at least one pint of full cream milk per day
  - ✓ Source of calcium, essential for healthy bones
- At least 6 – 8 cups of fluid each day. Try fruit juice\*, smoothies\*, soups\*, squash, milk or tea / coffee.
  - ✓ \*Good sources of vitamin C: improves wound healing and absorption of iron, essential for healthy blood

- Red meat, chicken, fish, eggs, cheese, beans / lentils, nuts, soya or Quorn® alternatives at least twice daily
  - ✓ *Source of protein, iron and zinc, essential for body repair*
- Include bread, rice, potatoes, pasta, cereal or chapattis at each meal
  - ✓ *Source of energy, fibre and B vitamins*
- 5 servings of fruit and vegetables. Examples of servings include a small glass of fruit juice, one apple/pear/banana, handful of berry fruits/dried fruits, tablespoon of peas/corn/carrots
  - ✓ *Source of fibre, water, vitamin C and other vitamins and minerals*

## When you are discharged home

### Ask yourself the following questions?

Am I eating less than before? Have I lost weight? Am I missing meals? If the answer is **yes** to any of these, see the sections on **enriching your food**, **nourishing drinks**, **quick and easy meals** and **vitamin and mineral supplements** below. This information will also be helpful for your relatives or carers.

## Enriching your food

Extra fats and sugars provide energy, which promote weight gain. Try these ideas:

- **To make fortified milk**, add 4 tablespoons of milk powder to a full pint of milk and use whenever you have milk: in tea/coffee, sauces, on cereal/porridge, in milk puddings
  - ✓ *Provides extra calcium, protein, zinc and vitamins A and D*
- Add 1oz grated cheese to soups, egg, fish, beans or meat dishes, in pasta sauces and mashed potato
  - ✓ *Provides extra calcium, protein, zinc and vitamins A and D*
- Add a knob of butter, margarine or ghee to vegetables, pasta, mashed potato, chapatti, rice and spread generously on sandwiches/toast
  - ✓ *Provides extra energy as fat, vitamins A and D*
- Add sugar, honey or syrup to milkshakes, smoothies, desserts, yoghurts
  - ✓ *Provides extra energy as sugar*

- Add 1 – 2 tablespoons of double cream to soups, sauces, on cereal / porridge, puddings, fresh or tinned fruit
  - ✓ *Provides extra energy as fat, vitamin A and D*
- Add Marmite® or yeast extract to soups, sauces, gravies
  - ✓ *Provides extra B vitamins*

## Nourishing drinks

Milkshake or soup style drinks (powders made up with either milk or water) are available at chemists and large supermarkets, containing balanced nutrition if you are missing meals or as an extra between meals. Some examples include Meritene® and Complian®. Alternatively, you can use **fortified milk** (see above) to make your own home-made nourishing drinks.

### Use fortified milk to make up:

**Hot milk drinks:** Coffee, Ovaltine®, Horlicks®, hot chocolate (avoid low calorie types). Double cream can be added to a hot milky drink, instant soup, Bovril® or Marmite®.

**Cold milk drinks:** Milkshakes made with fruit juice, milkshake syrup or powder. Add a scoop of ice cream or yogurt for extra nourishment.

**Fruit smoothies:** Blend fruit for example: banana, strawberries with milk plus ice cream/yogurt and honey or malt.

## Quick and easy meals

Following a hospital stay it is often the case that you feel more tired and due to this, everyday tasks such as shopping and cooking can seem more difficult than before.

Nutritious meals do not need to take long to prepare. Sandwiches, toast or jacket potatoes with various fillings such as cheese, tinned fish, egg or baked beans are simple and quick options. It may also be useful to have ready meals available in the fridge, such as cottage pie or macaroni cheese, in case you feel unable to cook.

There are a range of services available that deliver ready-prepared meals directly to your home. Please see below for some examples and to request more information:

<b>Oakhouse Foods</b>	<b>Wiltshire Farm Foods</b>	<b>Parsley Box</b>
<a href="http://www.oakhousefoods.co.uk">www.oakhousefoods.co.uk</a>	<a href="http://www.wiltshirefarmfoods.com">www.wiltshirefarmfoods.com</a>	<a href="http://www.parsleybox.com">www.parsleybox.com</a>
Tel: 0333 370 6700	Tel: 0800 077 3100	Tel: 0800 612 7225

## Vitamin and mineral supplement

Vitamins and minerals are substances found in the foods we eat and we depend on for a variety of body functions. A balanced diet provides all the essential vitamins and minerals we need. However, following illness or infection our intake of those can be poor. Taking an 'A-Z' type supplement for 3 – 6 months can help to restore body stores and support recovery and wellbeing. Some examples include: supermarket own brand, Centrum®, Sanatogen®, Multibionta®. Please speak with your GP, pharmacist or dietitian before commencing any over the counter vitamin or mineral supplement to ensure this is safe to take with any pre-existing medication or medical condition.

## Still losing weight?

If you continue to lose weight despite following the above advice, contact your GP for advice. They will be able to refer you to a registered dietitian for individual advice.

## Further questions

If you have other medical conditions with a dietary requirement that conflicts with this information, for example diabetes or kidney disease, please talk to your healthcare professional before following this advice.

*If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (the new name for DisabledGo)*  
<https://www.accessable.co.uk>



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