



# Improving nutrition (dairy free)

**Diabetes and Nutrition Services  
Community Dietitians**

**Dietary advice if you are having  
problems eating enough.  
A guide for adult clients and  
their carers or relatives.**

Service provided by

**Sirona**  
care & health

## **WARNING:**

**This book is not suitable for individuals with nut allergies.  
This booklet contains advice about improving nutrition.  
You may find it helpful if you:**

- Have been unintentionally losing weight
- Have an ongoing poor appetite
- Are only able to eat small amounts
- Want to gain some weight gradually
- Have been identified at risk of developing a pressure injury.

Some of the information contained in this leaflet may be unsuitable if you have diabetes or end-stage renal disease. If you are worried about your diabetes, please contact your healthcare professional.

## **Improving nutrition**

Many people who are unwell can have problems with eating. This can be upsetting or stressful. Medical treatment, surgery, and some medications can lead to side-effects that often reduce appetite, which can often lead to someone eating less than usual.

## **Maintaining good nutrition can:**

- Help prevent weight loss
- Improve your strength and maintain mobility levels
- Maximise your energy levels and keep you feeling good
- Help maintain your skin in good condition
- Support preparation prior to surgery
- Support recovery after illness or an operation
- Support your immune system to fight infections

## Top tips



Aim to eat 'little and often' throughout the day e.g. have 3 small meals and 3 snacks or nourishing drinks every day (something every 2-3 hours). Smaller amounts are easier to eat and regularly eating can maintain/improve your appetite.



Feeling hungry? Make the most of it, and eat more when you are feeling hungry e.g. if you are hungry most in the morning, try having a cooked breakfast, or if you are hungry between meals have a nourishing snack.



Eat first, drink later. Drinking with meals can make you feel fuller sooner.



Can't be bothered with cooking? Choose ready-made oven/microwave meals or tinned foods such as chilli, bolognaise, curry.



Try having a pudding, snack, soup, or a smoothie if you do not feel like eating a meal.



If you are feeling tired choose soft, moist foods which are easier to eat.



Take your time and rest during eating if you need to, have the best bits first!



Include something from each food group at meals to make sure you get a range of nutrients:

- Beans, pulses, fish, eggs, meat and other proteins
- Potatoes, bread, rice, pasta and other starchy carbohydrates
- Fruit and vegetables
- Dairy alternatives (e.g. soya or nut milk, dairy free cheese and yoghurt).



Avoid foods and drinks labelled 'low fat'/'low sugar'/'no added sugar'/'diet'/'light' – full fat and sugar products are more nourishing



A small glass of alcohol may stimulate your appetite – try having one 30 minutes before your meal (ask your doctor first to ensure it is suitable with any medication that you take).



Get out – fresh air can often help stimulate your appetite. Try going for a brief stroll or simply step or sit outside for a while before meals. Try to eat in a well ventilated room.



If possible, make meal times sociable by sharing the experience with others. Eating with relatives, friends, informal carers, attending local cafés, pub lunches or visiting voluntary, community or faith organisations with luncheon clubs or events can all help improve your eating experience.



If food shopping is difficult or too tiring, consider alternatives such as supermarket online delivery, community meal delivery services, or private delivery services (such as Wiltshire Farm Foods, Oakhouse Foods, Parsley Box or other companies).



Smoking can reduce your appetite. If you do smoke, try not to smoke in the half an hour before your meal. If you wish to give up, ask your GP or nurse for information on local support services.



# Making the most of your food

## How to fortify/enrich your food

It is important to choose food that is energy dense which provides lots of calories (energy) in each mouthful. Fortify your food by adding 1) fats and sugars to increase the calories. 2) nuts and / or pulses to increase protein and calories.

- Choose calcium enriched dairy free milk (this should be clearly labelled)
- Try adding soya or coconut milk powder (20-30g) to your usual dairy free milk (1 pint) for an enriched milk for extra energy and protein
- Aim to have two tablespoons of nuts, nut powder or nut butter each day
- Aim to have 3 tablespoons of pulses, e.g. lentils, butter beans, kidney beans, chickpeas or chickpea powder

If you have:	Fortify by adding:
Breakfast cereals	Nuts, soya cream (or other dairy free creams), coconut milk powder/ flour, sugars such as maple/golden syrup or molasses
Soups and savoury sauces	Dairy free margarine, dairy free cheese (grated), pulses, nutritional yeast or tofu pieces
Sweet sauces	Dairy free coconut milk powder/coconut flour
Potatoes (boiled, mashed or fried)	Dairy free margarine, dairy free cheese (grated) or dairy free cheese sauce
Cooked vegetables	Dairy free margarine, dairy free cheese (grated), dairy free cheese sauce or olive oil
Salads	Dairy free mayonnaise, olive oil, full fat salad dressing (such as Italian dressing) and /or chopped/mashed avocado, nuts and olives
Sandwiches	Use dairy free margarine, cheese, and protein rich fillings such as meat, eggs, fish such as tinned tuna.  Add mayonnaise and or mashed avocado
Puddings	Nuts, soya cream (or other dairy free creams), coconut milk powder/coconut flour, sugars such as maple syrup/brown, dairy free/ soya ice cream

## Nourishing snack ideas

Suitable choices between meals, aim for 2-3 per day

### Savoury

- Oatcakes with dairy free spread and /or dairy free cheese and chutney
- Tinned fish or scrambled egg on toast with added mayonnaise or dairy free cheese
- Pate or meat paste on toast
- Omelette made with soya cream and dairy free cheese
- Handful of nuts and/or seeds
- Tortilla chips, crisps (plain/sweet chilli) or crackers with avocado dip/smashed avocado or hummus
- Plain bagel or pitta bread with peanut butter (or other nut butters)
- Plain bagel or pitta bread with dairy free soft cheese and smoked salmon
- Crumpet with dairy free spread Marmite/peanut butter

### Sweet

- 2-4 bourbon, Oreo, ginger nut or other vegan/vegan friendly biscuits
- Dairy free chocolate
- Soya yoghurt/dessert
- Porridge made with dairy free milk and maple syrup or jam
- Stewed fruit and dairy free yoghurt or cream
- Fruit pies or crumbles made with dairy free fats
- Dairy free cakes
- Teacake with dairy free spread and jam/marmalade
- Small bowl of breakfast cereal (Weetabix, cornflakes, bran flakes, rice crispies etc.) with dairy free milk such as soya, almond milk

## Nourishing drinks

Non-dairy nourishing drinks such as chocolate flavoured soya milk shakes can be purchased from the supermarket. Ensure that you choose, full fat version each time and also full sugar if you do not have diabetes.

However, you can also make your own nourishing drinks. See overleaf for a variety of drink recipes:

- blend all the ingredients until smooth
- if using lemonade, add last.
- If you have been advised to have thickened fluids, thicken to required consistency, with your usual thickener prescribed by your GP





## Nourishing drink recipes

### Dairy Free Smoothie (Serves 1)

200ml sweetened soya milk  
1 heaped tablespoon  
smooth peanut butter  
1 heaped teaspoon cocoa  
1 tablespoon vegetable oil  
1 tablespoon sugar or honey

#### Per serving

**Calories:** 470kcal

**Protein:** 15.5g

### Fruit Blast (Serves 1)

100ml fresh fruit juice  
1 scoop sorbet  
1 level tablespoon sunflower  
or vegetable oil  
2 heaped teaspoon sugar  
100ml lemonade

#### Per serving

**Calories:** 300kcal

**Protein:** 3g

### Savoury Bloody Mary (Serves 1)

100ml tomato Passata  
sauce  
1 teaspoon Marmite  
2 tablespoon vegetable oil  
Worcestershire sauce/  
black pepper  
100ml lemonade

#### Per serving

**Calories:** 300kcal

**Protein:** 3g

### Virgin Pina Colada (Serves 1)

100ml tinned coconut milk  
(full fat)  
100mls of pineapple juice  
2 ½ tablespoon apricot jam  
2 ½ tablespoon icing sugar  
1 tablespoon golden syrup

#### Per serving

**Calories:** 520kcal

**Protein:** 2g

## Store cupboard ideas

If you can't get to the shops regularly, it's useful to have a store of some basic foods. Choose foods and drinks that are full in fat/sugar.

- Long life dairy free milk such as coconut, soya, rice, almond or cashew milk or other preferred options
- Long life soya/non-dairy desserts
- Oils
- Dairy free mayonnaise and salad dressings
- Nuts, seeds and dried fruit
- Jams, marmalades and nut butters
- Maple syrup, golden syrup and other sugars
- Birds custard powder or Alpro readymade soya custard
- Tinned fruit and vegetables
- Tinned pulses such as lentils and beans
- Tinned fish or meat
- Breakfast cereals (dairy free such as Weetabix, original porridge oats, Shreddies, cinnamon grahams, bran flakes, dairy free muesli and granola)
- Dairy free biscuits and crackers
- Pasta, rice and other grains such as bulgur wheat, cous cous, quinoa or pearl barley
- Flaxseed or golden linseed

## Notes.

## What to do if you continue to experience problems

If you continue to experience problems such as ongoing weight loss despite following the above dietary advice, start to keep a food diary and contact your GP for advice.

Your GP will consider if further medical tests are appropriate, and can also refer you onto a specialist dietitian.

### Let us know what you think and get involved

T: 0300 124 5300\*

E: [sirona.hello@nhs.net](mailto:sirona.hello@nhs.net)

W: [www.sirona-cic.org.uk](http://www.sirona-cic.org.uk)

\*Calls from landlines are charged up to 10p per minute; calls from mobiles vary, please check with your network provider. This is not a premium-rate number.

**This document can be provided in other formats and languages, please contact us for more information.**

Date of creation 10/2020 Date for review 10/2022 URN 0202



/SironaCIC



@SironaCIC



/SironaCIC



/sirona-care-&-health

#### Registered office

Sirona care & health CIC,  
2nd Floor, Kingswood Civic Centre,  
High Street, Kingswood,  
Bristol BS15 9TR  
Company Number: 07585003