

# Staying Well & Nourished in Later Life

A guide to improve your appetite



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## Have you lost weight without meaning to or think you might be underweight? ?

Perhaps you are not feeling as hungry or have lost your appetite.

If this is the case, then this booklet is for you.

Please try some of the suggestions to help you regain some of the weight you have lost and increase your appetite. If you have not regained your appetite or weight and are not feeling any better after 12 weeks, please contact your GP.

Remember losing weight is **not** a natural consequence of growing older.

Please note if you have any medical conditions for which you have previously received special dietary advice then please check with your GP or dietitian before using the information in this leaflet.

## Why is it important to make sure that you are maintaining a healthy weight ?

Malnutrition (as under-nutrition) can affect every system in the body. Older people who are malnourished:

- Are twice as likely to visit a GP
- Are at higher risk of hospital admissions
- Have a greater number of health issues
- Have reduced energy levels and ability to work, shop, cook and selfcare
- Have an increased risk of:  
Infections, Pressure ulcers, Falls, Muscle wasting and Weakness



## How to spot the signs

It can be difficult to recognise the signs of malnutrition as it may happen gradually. Some of the signs or symptoms to look out for include:

- Unplanned weight loss which can sometimes be seen by loose  
Clothing and belts  
Jewellery  
Dentures
- Poor appetite and or/eating less than usual
- Loss in muscle strength or having a recent fall
- Becoming ill more often

Dentures don't fit

Collar looser

Thin arms

Belt/waistband looser

Rings looser

Limbs thinner

Shoes/slippers loose





## What nutrients do we need to maintain good health? ?

It is important that we all follow a varied nutrient rich diet to support good health as we get older.

**Calcium and Vitamin D** are important for maintaining bone health, keeping them strong throughout our lives.

### CALCIUM

is found in milk and dairy products such as cheese and yogurt.



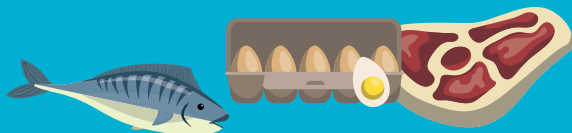
If you are avoiding dairy products, pick products that are fortified with Calcium and Vitamin D.

Vitamin D can be found in oily fish and in some fortified foods such as cereals, spreads and some mushrooms, however our major source for Vitamin D is sunlight on the skin. If your access to safe sunlight exposure is limited, a daily Vitamin D supplement (10 micrograms per day) is recommended.

### PROTEIN

is an important part of maintaining a healthy diet.

It helps to keep our muscles strong, supports our immune system and aids in repairing injuries. Eating too little protein can result in muscle weakness and a slower recovery from illness. As we get older, we need to eat more protein to help us stay healthy. Good sources of protein include lean meat, fish, eggs, beans and pulses, nuts and seeds and dairy products. Always try and include protein in your meals.



### FIBRE

is essential for the normal functioning of the gut.

It is related to a reduced risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes and bowel cancer. Most adults do not eat enough fibre in the UK. Good sources of fibre include beans and lentils, wholegrain foods and fruit and vegetables. Increase your fibre intake gradually to avoid gastrointestinal symptoms such as bloating and gas and allow your gut to adjust to the higher intake.



# INCREASING ENERGY INTAKE

is important when you have unintentionally lost weight or are having problems with your appetite. Boosting the amount of calories you eat in a day until you have reached a healthy weight and feel better is one way to help. Here are some suggestions on how to get your appetite back and ways to adapt your diet to increase your energy and protein intake while keeping portions a manageable size.



## Hints and Tips to Increase your Appetite

Here is a selection of ideas to help you increase your appetite and eat more:



### Little and Often

Try eating smaller meals throughout the day. 3 smaller meals with snacks and nourishing drinks.



### Eat first, drink later

Try not to drink liquids before or during a meal as they may fill you up.



### Eat foods that you fancy

Remember eating is to be enjoyed.



### If you smoke

leave a gap of 30 minutes before eating as smoking can make you feel less hungry. (If you are interested in stopping smoking speak to a Quit Your Way Scotland advisor on 0800 84 84 84).



### Stay active (if you can)

as regular exercise may help increase your appetite. A little walk or even just a wander into your garden may help as fresh air is good for the appetite. Chair based exercises can be done at home and will help improve your mobility and prevent falls.



**Social isolation can lead to poor appetite.** Try to eat socially, join a lunch club or invite a friend over for a meal.





## How to add more calories to your daily eating and make sure every bite counts

- **Choose full fat full sugar** foods avoiding lower fat / sugar options. Swap to full fat milk, use cream more, go for full fat butter and choose creamy full fat yogurts



- **Add cheese** to foods such as soups, mashed potatoes, pasta dishes or egg dishes



- **Add extra butter** to mashed potatoes, on top of vegetables and scrambled eggs / omelettes



- **Add cream** to soups, casseroles, creamy mashed potatoes or egg dishes



- **Mix chopped nuts, dried fruit, honey or jam** into cereals, porridge, puddings or desserts



- **Add mayonnaise**, salad cream or dressings to sandwiches and salads



- **Add high protein foods**, such as cooked meats, fish, beans and lentils to soups and sauces



- **Eat a pudding** like ice cream or full fat fruit yogurt



- **Add additional snacks and nourishing drinks** e.g. fortified hot chocolate or milkshakes 2/3 times a day

See page 10  
for recipe  
ideas

## How to fortify your milk

Fortified milk can increase the energy, protein and calcium content of milk. This fortified milk recipe can be popped into the fridge and used throughout the day. It can be substituted into any recipe that uses milk.

- 1 pint of full fat milk
- 4 tablespoons (50g) skimmed milk powder

*Whisk the milk powder into the milk and use throughout the day in tea or coffee, on cereal or in porridge, in custard or when making a shake or smoothie.*

548 kcals and  
37.3g protein  
per pint

## Simple Snack Ideas

- Scone or toasted tea cake with butter and jam
- Packet of crisps / Bombay Mix
- Handful of nuts and raisins
- Ready made rice pudding or custard
- Cheese and biscuits
- Individual pudding such as a trifle or cheesecake
- Sausage roll, scotch egg, mini pork pie or samosas



## Protein Boosts



- Simple additions to your meals and/or snacks can ensure your protein intake is adequate, helping maintain muscle strength
- Add chopped nuts, or sprinkle seeds onto porridge and cereal
- Add scrambled eggs, sardines, or baked beans to a side of toast
- Top oatcakes/crackers with a nutritious spread such as nut butter, houmous or cream cheese
- Add beans or pulses such as chickpeas or lentils to soups
- Add cooked meat or fish to sauces or stews

## 100 Calorie Boosts



- 1½ tablespoons honey
- 6 dried apricots
- Small handful of sultanas or raisins
- Small handful of nuts (any type)
- 1 tablespoon of butter
- 1 tablespoon of strawberry jam
- 25ml double cream
- 1 cream cracker with a slice of cheese



## Staying Hydrated

Drinking enough is important for everyone so aim to drink 6-8 glasses of fluid a day.

Water

Cordials

Milk

Fruit Juice

Tea

Coffee

All fluids count except alcohol



Start the day with a drink before breakfast



Get up and have a drink during an advert break



Put a reminder on the fridge

## Being dehydrated can lead to

Headaches

Dizziness

Nausea

UTI's

Irritability

Confusion

Constipation

Pressure Sores

As we get older our thirst sensation can be dulled so it is important to be aware of how much we drink.



Have a drink whilst waiting for the kettle to boil.

## If you are struggling to drink, try water rich foods such as

Jelly

Ice-Lollies

Yogurts

Custard

Salads

Fruit

Vegetables



## Making Mealtimes Matter

It is not just what you eat that can have an impact on your health and wellbeing, there are many other factors that can influence your appetite and how much you eat. Follow some of these ideas to help support you to eat well, age well and live well.



## Shopping and Cooking



- Stick to simple recipes (see recipe section)
- Freezing extra portions of food
- Buying pre-chopped ingredients such as fruit and vegetables (fresh, tinned or frozen)
- Find simpler ways to cook such as using Slow Cookers
- Keeping cupboards stocked with long life items



Dine with friends  
or family over a  
video call



Listen to the  
radio or  
music

## Store Cupboard Essentials

- Tinned meat and fish
- Tinned soups
- Tinned pulses, baked beans and chopped tomatoes
- Tinned fruit and vegetables
- Tinned rice pudding/custard
- Long life milk and skimmed milk powder
- Biscuits
- Cereals, oats and pasta
- Spreads such as jam, nut butter and honey



## Dental Health



- If you have dentures make sure they fit correctly and visit the dentist regularly
- Remember to brush regularly with high fluoride toothpaste, particularly if you are increasing your sugar intake

## Function

- If you have co-ordination difficulties and find using cutlery difficult, opt for finger foods such as vegetables and fruit packs that are cut into pieces, toasts or sandwiches, biscuits and individual cakes and chunks of meat or cheese. (Visit your GP to get help)
- Use colour contrasting crockery for people with vision issues or dementia.
- Try and make your eating environment pleasant and attempt to make the food you are eating look appealing.



Watch your  
favourite TV  
show



## Meal Ideas

If preparation is difficult or just too much, opt for a ready meal or perhaps start using a meal delivery company, ask a friend or relative to help you or sign up to Meal Makers and have a volunteer deliver you a home cooked meal once a week (see the Further Support section for more information).

### Breakfast

- Cereal with full fat or enriched milk
- Toast with high energy spread like peanut butter, chocolate spread or marmalade and butter
- Filled roll with bacon, sausage and/or egg
- Scrambled egg made with butter, cheese and full fat milk
- Porridge with whole or fortified milk and cream topped with honey, nuts and dried fruit
- Muesli or granola with creamy yogurt and fruit
- Croissant, crumpet or fruit loaf with butter or spread and jam

### Lunch / Light Meal

- Filled roll with bacon, sausage, fried egg
- Canned or homemade soup with croutons, cream or chopped meat added served with buttered bread
- Sandwich or roll filled with cheese, cold meat, tinned fish or egg made with butter or spread and mayonnaise
- Baked beans on buttered toast with grated cheese sprinkled on top
- Jacket potatoes with grated cheese and ham, tuna mayonnaise or baked beans and cheese
- Sausage roll, scotch egg, pork pie, samosas or pastry parcels
- Slice of quiche with some potato salad and / or coleslaw

### Dinner

- Homemade cottage pie made with buttery creamy mash
- Chicken and mushroom casserole with added cream and served with buttery mash or rice
- Macaroni cheese made with whole or fortified milk served with a slice of garlic bread
- Chicken curry made with full fat coconut milk, yogurt or cream served with rice and Indian bread such as puri, naan or paratha
- Rich cauliflower cheese made with fortified milk and extra butter served with garlic bread
- Fish Pie made with fish and boiled eggs mixed in a creamy sauce topped with buttery mashed potatoes
- Steak, chicken or mince pie and chips (homemade or shop bought)

### Dessert

- Milky puddings such as custard or rice pudding homemade or shop bought
- Individual deserts such as cheesecakes, trifles or mousses
- Fruit yoghurt – thick and creamy
- Canned or stewed fruit with custard or evaporated milk
- Ice cream with chocolate or fruit sauce
- Sponge puddings, pies and crumbles served with custard or cream
- Cheese and biscuits

Try to have a drink after each meal, such as water, milk, squash, fruit juice, tea or coffee



## Recipes

Below are some simple recipes for one, which can help make sure you meet your calorie and protein needs.

You can try swapping different fruits, vegetables, herbs, or other ingredients depending on availability, or to suit your own dietary requirements or preferences.

For more recipe ideas, order our Store Cupboard Recipe Book from [www.eatwellagewell.org.uk](http://www.eatwellagewell.org.uk)

### Creamy Tomato Soup

#### Ingredients

- 1 teaspoon butter
- 1 teaspoon olive oil
- ¼ chopped onion
- ½ tin chopped tomatoes
- 125ml chicken stock
- 35ml double cream
- Handful chopped fresh basil leaves (or 2 teaspoons dried basil)
- Salt and pepper to taste

#### Method

1. Heat the butter and olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Stir in onions and cook until tender. Mix in tomatoes and chopped basil. Season with salt and pepper. Pour in the chicken stock, reduce heat to low, and continue cooking for 15 minutes.
2. Blend until smooth using a hand blender or don't blend and have a chunkier soup.
3. Reduce heat to low, and gradually mix in the cream.



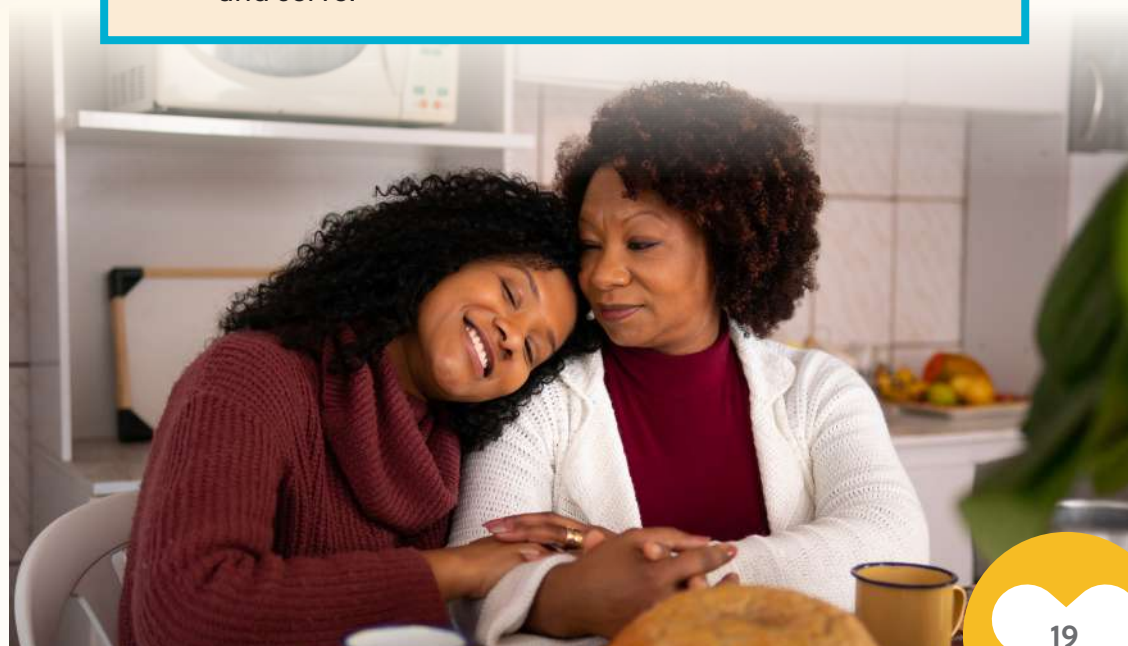
### Add some Cheesy Croutons

#### Ingredients

- 1 slice thick bread
- ½ tablespoon butter
- 55g cheddar cheese, grated

#### Method

1. Toast the bread slice.
2. Heat your grill to medium - high and butter the toasted slice.
3. Spread the cheese evenly over the slice and place under the grill for 30 seconds to 1 minute (until melted and golden brown).
4. Place on a cutting board, allow to rest for 1 minute and cut into 1-inch cubes.
5. Place the warm cheesy croutons on top of your soup and serve.





## Chicken Pie

### Ingredients

- ¼ onion sliced
- 100g chicken cut into chunks
- ½ teaspoon oil
- 40ml chicken stock
- ½ small tin of sweetcorn
- 1.5 tablespoons crème fraîche or cream
- Herbs to season
- 200g potatoes peeled and cut into chunks



### Method

1. Heat oven to 180C/160C fan/Gas 4.
2. Boil potatoes until soft. Drain and mash with ½ tablespoon of crème fraîche / cream.
3. Heat the oil in a large saucepan then add the onion and chicken. Fry for 5-10 minutes until the onion is soft and the chicken is golden.
4. Pour over the stock, bring to a boil, then simmer for 20 minutes until the chicken is cooked.
5. Stir in the sweetcorn.
6. Add the remaining crème fraîche / cream and the herbs.
7. Spoon the chicken mix into an oven proof dish and top with mash. Place on a baking tray and bake until the potato is golden.

## Lemon & Olive Oil Cake

### Ingredients

- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- 185g caster sugar
- Zest of 2 lemons
- 150g Greek yoghurt
- 150ml olive oil
- 275g plain flour
- 3 medium eggs
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 2 tablespoons poppy seeds



### Method

1. Preheat oven to 180°C / fan 160°C / gas mark 4.
2. Grease or line a loaf tin.
3. Mix all ingredients in a large bowl.
4. Pour into the tin and bake for 35-45 minutes (or until a knife comes out clean when inserted into the centre of the cake).



## Super Peanut and Banana Shake

### Ingredients

- 200mls full fat milk
- 1 tablespoon of smooth peanut butter
- 1 tablespoon of skimmed milk powder (15g)
- 1 banana
- 1 small tub full fat yogurt that is rich and creamy 150g (peach)

### Method

1. Place all ingredients in a blender and blend together.



## Very Berry Shake (Dairy Free)

### Ingredients

- 200mls full fat soya milk (or alternative)
- 100g raspberries
- 1 small tub full fat yogurt alternative such as Alpro Greek Style Strawberry Raspberry 150g
- 1 tablespoon honey

### Method

1. Place all ingredients in a blender and blend together.



## Luxury Hot Chocolate

### Ingredients

- 3 heaped teaspoons of drinking chocolate (or the preparation instruction amount if different)
- 200mls full fat milk
- Spray cream
- 1 small Flake chocolate bar

### Method

1. Heat the milk in a pan on the hob or in the microwave.
2. Stir in the drinking chocolate and top with a squirt of cream and the Flake bar.



## Smoothie Boosters

- Jam
- Honey
- Banana
- Peanut Butter
- Skimmed milk powder
- Full fat milk /yoghurt



Use these boosters to change the flavour, texture or thickness to suit your tastes.

## Further Support

Use Food Train or Food Train Connects to help you with your grocery shopping.

**[www.foodtrainconnects.org.uk](http://www.foodtrainconnects.org.uk) or 0800 304 7924**

**[www.thefoodtrain.co.uk](http://www.thefoodtrain.co.uk) or 01387 270 800**

Contact Meal Makers if you fancy having a friendly face deliver a fresh homemade meal to you once a week.

**[www.mealmakers.org.uk](http://www.mealmakers.org.uk) or 0800 783 7770**

## Ready Meals

If food preparation is difficult or just too much, opt for a ready meal or perhaps start using a meal delivery company.

- Wiltshire Farm Foods  
**[www.wiltshirefarmfoods.com](http://www.wiltshirefarmfoods.com) or 0800 077 3100**
- Oakhouse Foods  
**[www.oakhousefoods.co.uk](http://www.oakhousefoods.co.uk) or 0333 370 6700**
- Parsleybox **[www.parsleybox.com](http://www.parsleybox.com) or 0800 612 7225**
- Most supermarkets have ready meal ranges that cater for smaller appetites.

If you are concerned about weight loss, loss of appetite or have lost motivation to cook, please call Eat Well Age Well's Malnutrition Advice Line on **0800 13 88 220**

**The Malnutrition Advice line (0800 13 88 220) is open from 9am until 4pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays.**

*This is not an emergency line. People with immediate concerns about health and wellbeing should phone their GP or NHS 24 on 111.*



Eat Well Age Well is part of Scottish Charity Food Train and is funded by the Scottish Government.



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