



PATIENT INFORMATION

Maximising your food intake with breathing difficulties

Introduction

Food and fluid are essential to everyone. A balanced and varied diet can help maintain strength and fitness, as well as helping your body fight infection.

Pulmonary disease can reduce appetite due to increased shortness of breath. Maintaining a healthy weight is important because excess weight increases stress on the lungs making them work harder. Being underweight makes your lung muscles less effective, making breathing more difficult.

As your lungs are working much harder you require more calories and may be at risk of weight loss. Losing weight weakens your body, making you feel tired, more prone to infections and making breathing even more difficult than it already is.

Small dietary changes can be made to increase the calories and protein therefore preventing further weight loss and supporting your breathing.

This leaflet provides ideas on how to manage a small appetite and to make your diet more nourishing with the aim of easing some of your symptoms.

If you have lost weight unintentionally or have a poor appetite it is important to make the most of the foods you are eating.

The following ideas will help you to make the best choices of food to help you gain weight or help you prevent further weight loss.

- 1) Eat a balanced diet with a variety of foods
- 2) Fortify your food with extra calories
- 3) If you have a small appetite try small, frequent meals & snacks
- 4) Simple light meals can be just as nutritious as a big meal
- 5) Try nutritious snacks to increase your intake
- 6) Keep store cupboard foods in for when you don't feel like shopping

Eat a balanced diet with a variety of foods

A good, nutritious diet must contain the following:

- Carbohydrate
- Fat
- Protein
- Vitamins
- Minerals
- Fluid

It is very important to eat a wide variety of foods in order to have all the essential nutrients that your body needs.

Try to have the following each day:

Fluids

At least 6-8 cups or glasses daily. Try drinking after your meals so they don't fill you up. Do not fill up on drinks such as tea, coffee or squash at the expense of nourishing foods.

If you are experiencing shortness of breath you may find it easier to drink liquids. Choose nourishing drinks such as milkshakes, smoothies, malted milk drinks (e.g. Horlicks® and Ovaltine®), hot chocolate, Complan® and Build-Up®. Avoid 'diet' and 'low kcal' drinks.

Carbohydrates (Starchy and sugary foods)

Starchy food – bread, rice, pasta, potatoes, cereals

Sugary food – cakes, biscuits, sweets, chocolates, desserts, jam, sugar, honey, treacle.

These will provide you with energy. Have starchy food at **each** meal. Sugary foods can be eaten after a meal or as a snack.

Fats

These will also provide you with energy. Use fatty foods liberally e.g. butter, oil, margarines, sauces, gravies, pastry foods, nuts, oily fish, cheese, dressings, full-fat products (milk, yogurts, desserts for example). This will help to add calories without adding volume, which is helpful for those struggling with a small appetite.

Protein

Protein is needed to maintain and repair your body's tissues. You may need a higher protein intake than normal at the moment.

If you have not been well or are having treatment, calories are needed to help your body to use the extra protein properly. Have at least **3** protein foods each day e.g. meat, fish, eggs, cheese, milk, nuts, pulses (peas, beans and lentils), yoghurts.

Try to use **1 pint** of milk daily (preferably full fat).

Vitamins

Fruit and vegetables are a good source of some vitamins. You should try to have **5 portions** of fruit, vegetables or salad daily. However fruit and vegetables and salad tend to be low in energy so try to have them with higher calorie foods such as butter, cream, mayonnaise and salad dressing.

Fruit juices and fruit smoothies are useful as a way to include fruit in your diet. Try to drink a glass of orange juice or a drink containing vitamins (e.g. blackcurrant) each day.

If your appetite is poor do not fill yourself up on fruit and vegetables at the expense of more calorie dense foods.

Other vitamins are found in many foods, so eating a varied diet will help ensure you receive the full range.

Minerals

These are found in all foods, so again ensure you eat a wide variety of foods in your diet.

Your Health Team will discuss with you if you need any vitamin or mineral supplements.

Fortifying Your Food

Normal foods can be 'fortified' to be made more nourishing so that, even though you may only manage a small amount, it will help to maximise your intake of nutrients.

Don't worry that some of the advice is different to 'healthy eating' guidelines. Getting what your body needs at the moment is most important.

Use the following advice to increase your energy and protein intake further.

Fortified milk

Add 2-4 tablespoons of dried, skimmed milk powder to 1 pint of full fat milk and mix well. Keep in the fridge. You can use this as a drink, in cereal, or to replace ordinary milk when making custard, milky puddings, sauces, milky drinks (e.g. coffee, drinking chocolate) and soups.

Potatoes, starchy foods and vegetables

Add butter and milk or double cream or grated cheese to mashed potato. Add butter to jacket potatoes and other vegetables e.g. swede, carrots, parsnip. You can serve cheese sauce over vegetables. Try to use plenty of salad cream, mayonnaise and other dressings over salad vegetables. Also try stir fried vegetables.

Instant white sauces are available which can be made up with full fat milk or fortified milk and served with vegetables.

Use butter/margarine on pasta, couscous or bread, or try fried bread. Fry rice in oil once it is cooked.

Soups and casseroles

Try adding grated cheese or double cream just before serving. If you are having tinned soup, use 'cream of' which will be more nourishing. You can make packet or condensed soups with milk to make them more nutritious. Add extra meat, lentils, pulses or pasta to soups and casseroles. Have dumplings, bread and butter or croutons with your soups or casseroles.

Snacks/Nibbles

Include nuts, crisps, fruit (fresh, tinned or dried), biscuits, crackers and cheese, cakes and desserts (not low fat, low sugar or diet).

Breakfast

Use fortified milk as before. Add honey, syrup, full fat yogurt or fruit (dried or fresh) to cereals. Try adding honey, peanut butter, jam or chocolate spread to toast and butter.

Desserts/puddings

Have desserts with ice cream, cream, evaporated/condensed milk, full fat yogurts or custard. Add dried fruit, fresh fruit, honey, syrup or jam to milky puddings. Avoid 'low fat,' 'low sugar,' or 'healthy eating' desserts.

Sandwiches

Have plenty of butter, margarine, mayonnaise or salad cream. You could spread the filling thickly. Try to choose high calorie fillings such as cheese, peanut butter, hummus, tuna mayonnaise, egg mayonnaise, prawn mayonnaise, chicken and bacon mayonnaise, coronation chicken.

Drinks

Have milky or sweet drinks between meals. Include fortified milk (previous page). Other nourishing drinks include fruit juice, milkshakes, non-diet squashes and fizzy drinks, malted milk drinks (e.g. Horlicks® and Ovaltine®), hot chocolate, Complan® and Build-Up®. Avoid 'diet' and 'low kcal' drinks.

If you have a small appetite

This is a common problem that affects lots of people. There can be many causes, including illness, anxiety, pain depression, tiredness, nausea or some medication.

The following ideas may help you to eat more:

- Have smaller meals with frequent snacks e.g. have 3 small meals and 3 snacks daily, rather than 3 larger meals. You may find it easier to have a snack every 2 hours.
- Nibbling between meals and snacks can help. Try nuts, dried or fresh fruit, crisps, biscuits or sweets.
- Try to make the food as attractive as possible and serve it on a smaller plate. Don't overload the plate. You can always have second helpings or a dessert if you are still hungry.
- Have drinks about half an hour before and after foods instead of with meals, but remember you need to drink plenty.
- Cold food may be better tolerated than hot food. Try sandwiches, salads and dressing, ice cream, jelly and yogurts.
- Try and have your favourite foods more often to tempt your appetite.
- If you are allowed alcohol, a small drink such as a glass of sherry before a meal may help your appetite.
- Strong flavours may also tempt your appetite, for example, spicy foods, sweet foods, bitter foods.

- Be positive about what you can manage, every extra mouthful helps.
- Smoking can decrease your appetite, so cut down or stop if you can. Contact your GP for help with this.
- Allow plenty of time for meals. When eating, try to relax and eat slowly in comfortable surroundings with no distractions. After eating, relax for a little while before lying down or moving around again. Eating in company may also be helpful.
- Fresh air can help your appetite. Try taking a gentle walk outside.
- If you have 'good days' or good times of the day – make the most of them. If you feel hungry make sure you eat, even if your meal is not due at that time.
- Ensure that the food you eat is fortified (see previous section) if it can be.
- If you miss a meal completely due to poor appetite, you could have a milky drink or nutritious soup e.g. Build-Up ® or Complian ®. If you are regularly missing meals, you need to contact your Dietitian.
- If you already follow a special diet e.g. for high cholesterol or diabetes, you may need to see a dietitian. (Please discuss with your Health Team)

Simple Meal Ideas

If you don't feel like eating a big meal, a lighter meal can be just as nutritious.

Some examples of snack meals include:

Sandwiches for example, cold meat and salad, egg (hard boiled), cheese, tinned meat or fish, peanut butter, hummus.

Remember to use plenty of butter or margarine and add dressings (salad cream, mayonnaise, vinaigrette etc) where possible.

Toast with butter and topping for example beans, egg (hard-boiled, scrambled, poached or fried), tinned spaghetti, cheese, tinned fish in oil (such as tuna, pilchards, sardines).

Other ideas

- Jacket potatoes with various toppings such as cheese, beans, meat, prawn or tuna mayonnaise, or chilli.
- Bacon, egg, tomatoes, beans and bread (preferably fried)
- Sausage/fish fingers, beans and chips, or mashed potato.
- Cauliflower or macaroni cheese, and vegetables or salad.
- Corned beef hash and vegetables.
- Pie, pasty or sausage roll and vegetables or salad
- Stew, casserole or soup with bread.
- Omelette, beans/tinned tomatoes, bread and butter.
- Savoury rice and cold meat.
- Hard-boiled egg, bread and butter.

Use convenience foods if your appetite is affected by cooking smells, or if you are unable to stand for long periods. Avoid using 'low fat,' 'diet' or reduced sugar foods for now.

Snack Ideas

Try to have small snacks between meals to improve your overall food intake.

Sweet snacks

- Scones with butter/cream and jam
- Malt loaf/fruit loaf and butter
- Fruit bread/teacakes and butter
- Fruit (fresh, dried or tinned) with cream or ice cream
- Breakfast cereal with full fat milk
- Biscuits
- Cakes
- Mousse, trifle
- Egg custard
- Milky puddings e.g. rice pudding
- Yogurts – marked full fat e.g. Thick 'n creamy
- Jelly and cream or ice cream
- Milky drinks
- Chocolate

Savoury snacks

- Crackers and cheese
- Cheese with an apple
- Crisps
- Nuts
- Bread and butter
- Toast
- Sandwiches
- Dips with breadsticks
- Soup (with cream, Build Up® or Complian®)
- Mini pies/sausage roll/pasty

Store Cupboard Ideas

Some days you may not feel like going shopping.

Below are some ideas for you to have in your home so you always have a good supply of basic foods. Remember to check 'best before' dates before using the foods. **Do not** use them if they are out of date, as they may be harmful to you.

Milk	Long life (UHT) milk or milk powder
Meat and fish	Tinned varieties e.g. tuna, pilchards, salmon, sardines, ham, pork, corned beef, stewed meat in gravy, chicken in white sauce.
Starchy foods	Tinned spaghetti, crackers, breakfast cereals, pasta, rice, biscuits, instant mashed or tinned potatoes
Fruit and vegetables	Tinned varieties e.g. beans, soups, fruit, or dried fruit, lentils, frozen vegetables

Desserts	Tinned fruit, custard, milky puddings, jelly, packet mousse. Tinned sponge puddings. Condensed/evaporated milk.
Drinks	Squash, drinking chocolate, long life fruit juice.
Others	Jam, honey, sweets, chocolate, peanut butter, syrup.

Frozen food can be an easy way to make quick nutritious meals. Try frozen meats, ready meals, frozen fish, fish fingers, frozen vegetables or ice cream.

Information given to: _____

Information Given by: Print Name _____ Signature _____

Contact Number  _____

Produced by the department of Nutrition and Dietetics, Torbay hospital

Further copies are available from the intranet (Nutrition and Dietetics website) and iCare.