

Food First: Advice for eating if you have lost weight or are underweight

You may have been given this resource because you have lost weight, are at risk of weight loss or are trying to gain weight. If you have swallowing difficulties, specific dietary requirements or have diabetes, this resource may not be appropriate for you. Please speak to a Dietitian for personalised advice.

What do I need to do to prevent further weight loss and promote weight gain?

- ① Aim to have 1 pint of full fat (whole milk) each day (see below) and,
- ② Include 2 high energy snacks each day from the list below and,
- ③ Aim to eat 3 meals a day that have been fortified (see below)

It is recommended to aim for an additional 500 calories (energy) per day to support weight gain. Ideally this should include high protein foods to help prevent muscle loss and restore lost muscle.

① Aim to have 1 pint of full fat (whole milk) each day:



- Swap to full fat (whole milk) as this contains extra calories.
- Fortify a pint of whole milk by adding 4 tablespoons of skimmed or whole milk powder.
- Add the milk powder to a jug, stir in a small amount of milk to make a paste then slowly add the remaining milk whilst mixing to remove any lumps. Cover and store in the fridge, using within 24 hours. Use for making hot drinks, cereal, porridge, desserts and in cooking e.g. in mashed potato.
- If you use milk alternatives, soya is the highest in terms of protein content. Whichever you use, choose the one that has the highest calories (kcal) and protein per 100mls and one fortified with calcium and iodine. 'Barista' and 'Whole' versions are higher in energy.
- You can also buy over-the-counter nutritional supplements e.g. Aymes Retail®, Complan®, Meritene Energis® or Nurishment®, Huel® Powder or Protein Works® Complete 360 Meal. Make these up with whole milk rather than water.

Have a homemade milkshake twice per day:

Homemade milkshakes can be more affordable and just as nutritious. Give our recipe a go:

- 180mls of full fat (whole) milk
- 4 tablespoons (36g) of skimmed milk powder (supermarket own or Marvel®. If you can obtain whole milk powder e.g. Nido®, it will provide more calories but is slightly lower in protein).
- 4 teaspoons (16g) of milkshake powder with added vitamins and minerals (e.g. Aldi® Cowbelle Milkshake Powder, Lidl® Goody Cao, Asda®, Morrisons® or Tesco® Milkshake Mixes, Nesquik®)



Directions: Using a fork or a shaker, blend the dried milk powder and milkshake powder together with a little milk. Gradually mix in the remaining milk until dissolved, then serve.

Recipe made with skimmed milk powder provides approximately 320kcal and 19g of protein.

You can increase the calories further by adding double cream, whipped cream or ice cream.

Prefer hot drinks?

Swap out the milkshake powder for 3-4 tsp of hot chocolate, Ovaltine® or Horlicks® powder (follow quantity on the instructions). A hot chocolate with 2 tbsp of double cream stirred in can provide 440kcal and 16g protein. Adding whipped cream and marshmallows will increase it even further!



② Include 2 high energy snacks each day:

Including a snack mid-morning, mid-afternoon and potentially before bed can help to add extra energy to your daily diet. Eating 'little and often' is an effective way to spread your intake across the day if you have a small appetite. Try to choose at least 2-3 of the following snacks per day:

Sweet options

- Full fat yoghurt, fromage frais or lassi
- Dried fruit – plain or coated
- Chocolate bar or squares
- Biscuits, cookies or shortbread
- Slice of cake, iced bun, donut
- Mini rolls, muffins or other cake bars
- Croissant, pain au chocolat or other pastries
- Malt loaf or fruit cake with butter
- Scone with clotted cream and jam
- Jam or custard tarts, cereal bars or flapjacks
- Tinned fruit with evaporated or condensed milk
- Rice pudding, custard, semolina or crème brûlée
- Chocolate mousse
- Instant dessert e.g. Angel Delight®
- Seekhund, Pak or Sero with extra milk
- Cake rusk, mishri, shakar paray, kheer, mithai
- Trifle or full sugar jelly (can make with milk)
- Waffles or pancakes
- Peanut butter on banana or toast
- Slices of melon, pineapple or orange segments
- Grapes, berries or slices of banana
- Ice cream or lolly, kulfi

Savoury options

- Cheese and crackers, cheese triangles
- Cracker/bagel with cream cheese and salmon
- Nuts or trail mix, Bombay mix
- Onion bhaji, poppadoms, pakora, samosas
- Crisps, popcorn or pretzels
- Sandwiches or wraps
- Crumpet with butter
- Cocktail sausages or sausage rolls
- Mini pork pies or scotch eggs
- Hard boiled or devilled eggs
- Eggs and soldiers, omelette or quiche
- Oatcakes/rice cakes with nut butter
- Carrot sticks or pitta with houmous
- Chapatti and dahl, falafels
- Bread or crackers with paté
- Chicken nuggets or breaded strips
- Mini pizzas
- Pasties or cheese straws/twists
- Avocado on toast, crackers or rice cakes
- Creamy soup with buttered bread
- Sushi, rice rolls, gyoza or bao buns

③ Aim to eat 3 meals a day that have been fortified

You can add extra calories to your meals without significantly increasing the volume. This is known as 'food fortification'. Enriching foods in this way can be helpful if you have a small appetite. This can be done to either home-cooked meals or shop-bought ready meals. Examples include:

Food or drink	Ways to fortify/add more calories
Toast or sandwiches	Butter, margarine, sandwich fillers, cheese, mayonnaise, salad cream, nut butters, jam, marmalade, chocolate spread, cream cheese, avocado.
Mashed potato and soups	Fortified whole milk, milk powder, double cream, grated cheese.
Cereals and porridge	Milk powder, sugar, honey, syrups, jaggery, jam, fortified whole milk, double cream, dried or fresh fruit, coconut cream, ground nuts and seeds.
Main meals	Cheese, cream cheese, mayonnaise, creamy sauces, double cream, milk powder, butter or margarine, oil, ghee, coconut cream or milk.
Puddings e.g. rice pudding, custard, crumble	Condensed milk, evaporated milk, ice cream, full fat greek yoghurt, double cream, squirty cream, custard made with fortified milk, Elmlea® Plant cream, Oatly® cream, honey, syrup, sugar, stewed fruits.
Hot drinks	Milk powder, double cream, sugar, marshmallows, fortified milk.
Scrambled eggs or omelette	Grated cheese, oil or butter, cream, fortified milk, chorizo, ham or bacon.

What about healthy eating? When someone is at risk of malnutrition, healthy eating guidelines do not apply. Try to avoid low fat, low sugar and diet food and drinks as these will be lower in energy. The above advice includes high fat foods which some people worry will harm their heart, however malnutrition itself is a risk to heart health.