

How to eat well with a small appetite

This leaflet is for patients with kidney disease. It explains how to control your nutritional intake when you do not have much of an appetite. If you have any further questions, please contact us using the details on the back page.

Eating a well-balanced and nourishing diet that is high in calories and protein will:

- prevent further weight loss
- help you regain weight if you have lost weight
- make you feel less tired
- assist in fighting infection
- help with wound healing.

Nourishing diet – the main points

- **Eat little and often.** Eat three small meals and two to three snacks every day. Include a variety of foods that you enjoy.
- Have **starchy, 'energy providing' foods at each meal**, such as breads, potatoes, rice, pasta, cereals, rice flour, cornmeal, cous cous, maize, fufu, taro or yam.
- Include **protein-rich foods** in your meals at least twice a day. This includes meat, chicken or turkey, fish, eggs, cheese, tofu or soya mince, Quorn, yoghurt or lentils.
- Try to eat **two portions of fruit and two portions of vegetables** every day to help ensure you consume adequate amounts of vitamins and minerals.
- If you cannot eat everything on your plate, eat the starchy and protein-rich foods first and leave behind the vegetables.
- **Drink after your meals, instead of with your meals** to prevent filling yourself up.
- People often find **soft foods easier to manage** when their appetite is poor, for example shepherd's pie, curry, well-stewed meat, mashed potato, fish in sauce and scrambled eggs.
- **Have a pudding twice a day.** Try fruit and cream, cheesecake, ice cream, crème caramel, trifle, full fat fromage frais/yoghurt or plain sponge cake.
- **Have high-calorie snacks between meals**, such as cake, biscuits, crackers, bread sticks and toast with butter/margarine and syrup/honey/jam.

How to increase the calories in your food

If you are only able to eat small meals, you need to make sure your food is 'calorie-packed'. This can be done by adding extra fats and/or sugars. This can also make food taste better. Below are some ideas on how to **add calories to everyday foods**

Add the following to breakfast cereals or porridge:

- Full fat fromage frais/yoghurt or cream
- Syrup, honey or sugar
- Butter or cheese

Add the following to breads (sliced bread, roti, pitta, hard dough)

- Thickly spread butter or margarine
- Jam, honey, syrup, cream cheese, meat or fish paste

Add the following to puddings:

- Double cream or clotted cream, full fat yoghurt/Greek yoghurt, or custard or mascarpone
- Ice cream, jam, honey, syrup or sugar

Add the following to meat and fish dishes, stews or curries:

- Creamy sauces, cream cheese, cheese, cream or crème fraîche
- Extra butter or margarine
- Oils (try fried rice instead of boiled and try frying/roasting meat or fish instead of baking, steaming, poaching or grilling)
- Dumplings, pasta, croutons, eggs or lentils

Add the following to potatoes, yam, vegetables or salad:

- Butter or margarine (melt over vegetables, add to mashed potato/yam)
- Try par-boiling vegetables/potatoes/yam or other starchy vegetables, and then frying or roasting in oil
- Add mayonnaise, salad cream or oil-based dressings to salads

Quick and nourishing snacks and light meal ideas

Have snacks and or puddings twice per day:

Savoury	Sweet
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Toast with tinned fish, cream cheese or egg• Sandwiches with cold meat, tinned tuna/salmon or egg. Spread filling thickly and add mayonnaise or salad cream• Rice cakes, corn-based crisps, bread sticks, crackers with butter or cream cheese• Plain biscuits and plain cakes• Toasted crumpet, croissant, hot cross bun or Jamaican bun, scone, pitta/roti/naan or bagel. Add butter, margarine, jam, honey or cream• Meat/vegetable samosas, plain dosa, meat/fish patties, mini chicken kiev, pies and pasties, sausage rolls, spring rolls and fish fingers• Quiche or omelette	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sponge and custard/cream, baked custard, tinned fruit and cream,• Ice cream, fromage frais, crème caramel or trifle, mousse, panna cotta, cheesecake, pavlova, meringue• Danish pastries, brioche, croissants, doughnuts, muffins, cream-filled cakes,

Other tips:

- If you are feeling too unwell or too tired to cook, microwave ready meals can be a good choice.
- Having a few items in the freezer will also make cooking easier e.g. fish fingers, chicken nuggets bread, or ice cream.
- If you feel nauseous, avoid strong cooking smells if possible. Try eating cold foods such as sandwiches or salads containing meat, fish, egg or beans/lentils/tofu. If you know you will be away from home for more than a few hours carry some snacks with you. Biscuits, cereal bars and rice pudding or custard pots are good options

What about my low potassium/low phosphate diet?

Many kidney patients are also advised to follow a low potassium and/or a low phosphate diet. However, when you are not eating well or if you have lost weight too quickly, these restrictions can be relaxed. **Once your appetite has returned and the weight has been regained, you will need to return to your normal diet.**

Some of the suggestions in this leaflet are not suitable for kidney patients with diabetes. Please ask your renal dietitian for further guidance.

Contact us

If you have any questions, please contact the **renal dietitians** on **020 7188 4128** (9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday). If we are unable to take your call, please leave us a message and we will call you back.

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Pharmacy Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your medicines, please speak to the staff caring for you or call our helpline.

t: 020 7188 8748 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS). To make a complaint, contact the complaints department.

t: 020 7188 8801 (PALS) **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

t: 020 7188 3514 (complaints) **e:** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please get in touch.

t: 020 7188 8815 **e:** languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111

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