

Making mealtimes manageable

Our eating habits change as we go through life. We may start to like different foods, enjoy unusual combinations or lose interest in eating. Small fluctuations in weight are perfectly normal, but to avoid noticeable weight change look at the following suggestions to help improve your intake.

- **Keep snacks nearby** and store foods that are easy to prepare so you can make the most of times when you feel hungry.
- **Try eating little and often** as smaller portions and snacks are easier to manage.
- **Adapted cutlery and crockery may be easier to use**, or prepare meals that you can eat with your hands (see the 'Finger foods' resource).
- **Make meals look colourful** so they are more appealing and appetising.
- **Give yourself time to eat** in a calm, peaceful and well-lit environment. Eating with others can also make mealtimes more pleasurable.
- **Remove any distractions** and keep your table free of clutter so that you can concentrate on your food.
- **Turn off the television** at mealtimes as it can be distracting. Background music may be more relaxing.
- **Season food generously to add flavour.** Use pepper, lemon juice, herbs or spices rather than salt.
- **Try adding sugar to savoury foods** like baked beans, scrambled egg or gravy to increase taste.
- **Cook sweeter vegetables** such as carrots, parsnips or swede and serve chutneys and pickles with main dishes to add sweetness.
- **Keep meals warm on an insulated plate** or put aside food in the oven or microwave and serve later.

Tip: Contact your local occupational therapy department or disability resource centre for more information about available equipment to help you eat and drink more independently.



Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about these information sheets, please contact the Lambeth and Southwark Action on Malnutrition Project on 020 30495422 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

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

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

To make comments or raise concerns about the Trust's services, please contact PALS. Ask a member of staff to direct you to the PALS office or:

t: 020 7188 8801 at St Thomas' **t:** 020 7188 8803 at Guy's **e:** pals@gstt.nhs.uk

Language Support Services

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

t: 020 7188 8815 **fax:** 020 7188 5953

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

NHS Choices

Provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make choices about your health.

w: www.nhs.uk

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t: 0848 143 4017 **e:** members@gstt.nhs.uk **w:** www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk