

Introduction

The giving of food is often symbolic of caring and nurturing but as a person becomes increasingly unwell, reduced food intake is likely to be a natural process.

It may also be associated with weight loss. This can be stressful for both carers and the person who is unwell.

This leaflet has some tips that may support you and your family so that you can:

- 1 Continue enjoying food as you are able
- 2 Maximise your energy levels
- 3 Get the best nutritional value from any food that you are able to eat.



Care for yourself

Caring for an unwell person can be a tiring and stressful time. If you would like to speak to someone about your concerns, please contact Arohanui Hospice.

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What about food?

Tips to help increase food intake

- Use easy to prepare foods, tinned baby food, frozen meals or Meals on Wheels
- Try to rest before eating
- Try to eat a small meal or snack every 2-3 hours or more when you feel like eating
- Change from a dinner plate to a bread and butter plate
- Serve favourite foods more often
- Chop soft foods into bite size pieces (this can make eating less of an effort)
- Cold food may be easier than hot foods if you are nauseous. Try ice-cream, jelly, dairy foods, instant puddings and yoghurts
- You may find it easier to drink rather than to eat (eg Fortisip, Complan, Ensure or a Smoothie)
- Try different fluids - tomato juice, lemonade, ginger beer, lucozade (to reduce fizz place glass in microwave for 10 seconds)
- A small glass of alcohol before your meal may increase appetite.



To add extra calories if desired

Milk powder and “double strength milk”

- Use double strength milk instead of normal milk for drinks, sweet or savoury sauces, custards, puddings, porridge, cereals, milkshakes and soups. Also use in your baking.
- To make double strength milk, add 2-3 tablespoons of dried skim/whole milk powder to 500 ml of milk.

Cheese

Grate cheese on foods; make cheese sauces; add to salads and sandwiches. Cheesy mashed potato tastes great!

Dried fruit

Add to cereals, in baking, and have as a snack.

Ice-cream

Add to puddings, canned fruit, smoothies, porridge, cereals or milkshakes.

Mayonnaise

Add to sandwiches, salads and potatoes. Add to tuna, or grated cheese.

Margarine and vegetable oils

Spread margarine thickly on baked goods and bread. Add to mashed potato, hot vegetables, rice or pasta. A swirl of olive oil in soups, or on salads can add extra calories and taste.

Nuts (whole or crushed)

Use as a snack, add to baking, desserts, salads, as a topping on vegetables or in a stir-fry.

Sauces and gravies

- Use cream based sauces (e.g. pasta sauce) on meat, fish and chicken dishes.
- Use traditional meat gravies on meat and vegetables or instant packet gravies.
- Add white sauce and cheese sauce (made using double strength milk) or creamy salad dressings to your meals.
- Add extra peanut butter to satay sauce served with meat kebabs or vegetables.
- Use undiluted condensed soups as a base for sauces.

Sugar, brown sugar, golden syrup, honey, jam

Add to cereals, desserts, toast, pancakes, pikelets, waffles and crumpets and use in baking.

Note: This may not be suitable if you have diabetes

Standard/whipping cream, evaporated milk and condensed milk

Add to breakfast cereals, porridge, fruit and puddings. Also add to soups, mashed potato and sauces.

Sour cream

Add to soups, baked potatoes, nachos, dips and sauces.

Spreads

Spread the following thickly on bread or crackers; jam, peanut butter, “Nutella”, avocado, cream cheese, hummus and cheese spreads.