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Adding extra nourishment to your food when you have diabetes

Rehabilitation & Support

A guide for patients and carers



This leaflet is for patients with diabetes who are receiving cancer treatment at The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre. The leaflet explains how to maintain good nutrition during your treatment.

As a patient with diabetes, you may need to increase the amount of nourishment in your diet. This may be because you have lost weight or cannot manage to eat as much as you normally would at mealtimes.

Eating well is essential to help you cope and recover from your treatment. It is particularly important that your diet contains plenty of protein and energy. At the same time, you should aim for your blood sugars to remain at an acceptable level.

This leaflet may contain different advice to that which you have been given in the past. However, adequate nutrition is most important now. Your dietitian can advise you when you need to return to your usual diet.

Eating differently, changes to some medications and your treatment may all affect your blood sugars. If your blood sugars are much higher or lower than normal, please contact your GP practice or your Diabetes Specialist Nurse for advice, to help manage your diabetes.



You should continue to

- Limit sugar and sweet foods and drinks
- Eat regular meals
- Have starchy food, e.g. bread, potatoes, rice, pasta, porridge, breakfast cereals (not sugar coated) crackers or plain biscuits at each meal
- Monitor your blood sugar

How to increase protein and energy (calorie) intake if your appetite is poor

- Try to have three small meals and snacks per day, choosing nourishing foods and drinks
- Have your main meal at the time of day when you feel most well
- If you do not want a pudding straight after your meal, wait for an hour or two
- Use at least one pint of full cream milk each day
- Try to have protein foods such as meat, fish, eggs, cheese, beans, dahl, lentils and nuts - or vegetarian meat alternatives such as tofu or quorn at least two times per day
- Keep a store cupboard of easy to prepare foods such as tinned meats and fish, long life or dried milk, dried mashed potatoes, packet or tinned soup, baked beans, tinned spaghetti, tinned potatoes, tinned chick peas, tinned kidney beans, ready-made custard. Quick and easy snacks are also useful to have in such as nuts or cheese
- Remember to make your diet as varied as possible and it is alright to eat more fat at the moment. This will give you more calories

Practical tips

Milk

You can increase the protein in milk by adding 3-4 tablespoons of dried milk powder to one pint of full fat milk - this is called fortified milk. This can then be used in drinks, on cereals, in puddings, soups or in sauces.

Drinks

Try to have nourishing drinks between meals, e.g. hot or cold fortified milk (see previous practical tip on milk), milky coffee or cocoa drinks, ice cream soda or sugar free fizzy drinks topped with ice cream. Nutritional supplement drinks may be prescribed by your doctor or dietitian if you are unable to take enough diet.

Cereals

Add fortified milk to cereal or porridge. Evaporated milk, full-fat yoghurt or double cream could be added.

Vegetables

Add butter or margarine, chopped hard-boiled egg, grated cheese or cream cheese and serve with a savoury sauce, e.g. cauliflower cheese.

Mashed potato

Add double cream, crème fraiche, butter or margarine, chopped hard-boiled egg, grated cheese, fortified milk, flaked fish, cooked bacon/ham, corned beef, lentils.



Soups and sauces

Try to add sauces to meals, e.g. parsley and cheese. Make with fortified milk and add extra butter, margarine, double cream or evaporated milk.

Make condensed soup with fortified milk. Add butter or margarine, cubed or minced meat, cooked beans or lentils, double cream, grated cheese. (Do not boil soup with double cream or cheese added to it as it will curdle).

Eggs

Omelettes, scrambled egg and egg custards are good sources of protein. Try adding cheese or bacon to savoury egg dishes and include an egg in the morning for breakfast. Never eat raw eggs and ensure that eggs are cooked thoroughly.

Puddings

- Use fortified milk to make custard or milk puddings then add sweeteners or buy sugar-free puddings and add cream
- Try scones, tea-cakes, crumpets or tea-bread. Add butter, reduced sugar jam and cream
- Have fruit pies, pastries or crumble (use sweetener to taste) with cream, evaporated milk or custard
- Full fat yoghurts or fromage frais
- Milk puddings - home-made, canned or in pots
- Fresh or tinned fruit in own juice with cream or ice-cream

Fats

- Try frying foods and adding vegetable oil, margarine or butter, where possible, to give extra calories (fried egg, bacon, sausage for breakfast)
- Chips
- Add mayonnaise to salad or sandwiches, e.g. tuna or egg mayonnaise

Suggested Meal Plans

Breakfast

- Small glass of unsweetened fruit juice
- Cereal or porridge with fortified milk
- Toast with butter, sunflower or olive oil margarine and/or low sugar marmalade
- Bacon, sausage, egg, beans
- Cheese or cheese spread on toast

Snack

- Milky drink
- Plain biscuits
- Cheese and crackers
- Crisps or nuts

Mid-day Meal

- Meat, fish, egg, cheese or beans
- Vegetables or salad
- Potatoes, rice, pasta, bread
- Dessert, if wanted



Snack

- Milky drink
- Milk pudding
- Scone with reduced sugar jam and/or butter/margarine
- Crumpet
- Muffin
- Plain biscuits
- Sandwich
- Mini pork pie
- Pizza or quiche

Evening Meal

- Creamy soup with roll and butter
- Beans, cheese, egg on toast with grated cheese
- Milk pudding, egg custard, vanilla ice-cream
- Cheese and biscuits

Useful contact

Dietetic Department Clatterbridge Cancer Centre - Wirral

0151 556 5117

How we produce our information

All of our leaflets are produced by staff at The Clatterbridge Cancer Centre and this information is not sponsored or influenced in any way. Every effort is made to ensure that the information included in this leaflet is accurate and complete and we hope that it will add to any professional advice you have had. All our leaflets are evidence based where appropriate and they are regularly reviewed and updated. If you are concerned about your health in any way, you should consult your healthcare team.

We rely on a number of sources to gather evidence for our information. All of our information is in line with accepted national or international guidelines where possible. Where no guidelines exist, we rely on other reliable sources such as systematic reviews, published clinical trials data or a consensus review of experts. We also use medical textbooks, journals and government publications.

References for this leaflet can be obtained by telephoning 0151 556 5570.

If you need this leaflet in large print, Braille, audio or different language, please call 0151 556 5570.

If you have a comment, concern, compliment or complaint, please call 0151 556 5203.

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