

# Heart Healthy Diet for Poor Appetites



## Food as Treatment

During periods of ill health it is common to have a poor appetite and eat less food. Over time this can lead to unplanned weight loss and slow down your recovery. You have been given this leaflet because you are not eating enough and you may have been losing weight. It is important in recovery to have enough energy, protein, fat, vitamins and minerals to help your body repair and avoid weight loss while your body is recovering.

This advice may only be necessary in the short term. **Once you are eating well again or once you have reached your target weight, you can return to a healthy, balanced diet.**

### Tips to increase your intake:

- Choose high energy foods: avoid low calorie or diet options
- Eating 6 smaller meals or snacks may be easier than the traditional 3 meals a day
- Don't drink too close to a mealtime as this can fill you up
- If you are struggling to prepare foods use convenience foods or ready meals.
- Add extra calories to your food (see table on page 4)
- Include nourishing drinks (see page 6 for ideas)
- If your food intake is limited a general multivitamin and mineral tablet can be taken
- If you are feeling sick/nauseous choose cold foods and foods without a strong smell e.g. jelly and ice cream\*, sandwiches, cheese and biscuits
- In hospital choose energy dense (ED) meals, ask for biscuits on the tea round and extra puddings at mealtimes.

## Frequently asked questions before you start:

### ***Can I still use this advice if I have high cholesterol?***

Increasing your weight does not necessarily require high amounts of sugar and saturated fat, which may increase risk to your heart health. Saturated fat is typically found in animal products such as butter, pies, cakes, fatty cuts of meat and cheese - we recommend that you reduce your intake of these foods. This leaflet promotes 'healthier fats' (called unsaturated fats) which are better for heart health and still provide useful calories (energy) to help stabilise your weight.

### ***What if I have diabetes?***

Eating enough energy, protein and micronutrients is essential for recovery. However, if you have diabetes it is important to keep your blood sugar levels stable. It may be that if you have a small appetite and your eating habits change, your medications need to be adjusted to prevent you having blood glucose readings that are too high or too low. Always inform your doctor or diabetic nurse if you are making changes to your diet at home. High sugar options in this booklet are labelled with an asterisk (\*).

### ***I have been advised to have a low salt diet – what can I eat?***

Salt increases your blood pressure which can put extra strain on your heart so it's important to not eat more than the maximum recommended daily amount of 6g (a teaspoon). Some high energy foods naturally low in salt include: milk, yoghurts, smoothies, unsalted nuts and seeds, fruit juice and jelly. Read food labels when shopping and try and opt for foods with less than 0.3g salt per 100g and avoid foods with more than 1.5g salt per 100g.

Further advice on a low salt diet can be found on the British Heart Foundation website:

<https://www.bhf.org.uk/heart-health/preventing-heart-disease/healthy-eating/salt>

## The following table offers ways to add extra calories and protein into your food:

<p><b>To soups/ casseroles ADD</b> Beans, Lentils, Grated cheese, Milk powder, Croutons, Rice, Pasta, Dumplings, Barley/ Couscous Vegetable or olive oil, Milk Powder, Single cream</p>	<p><b>To bread, toast, cracker, crumpets ADD</b> Thick spreading of vegetable or olive spread, Soft cheese, Jam*, honey*, chocolate spread* or lemon curd*, Mashed banana, Nut butter, Mashed avocado, Hummus</p>	<p><b>To breakfast cereals ADD</b> Jam*, honey* or syrup*, Sugar*, Yoghurt (full fat), Dried fruit* and nuts</p>
<p><b>To vegetables and salads ADD</b> Chopped hard boiled egg or tinned beans Sauces or salad dressings (page overleaf), Grated cheese, Vegetable or olive spread, Salad Cream, Dips (page overleaf)</p>	<p><b>To sauces ADD</b> Cheese Vegetable or olive spread Yoghurt (full fat) Milk powder Vegetable or olive oil</p>	<p><b>To puddings also ADD</b> Custard Ice cream* Sorbet* Single Cream Jam*, honey*, syrup* Sugar* Fruit, nuts Evaporated milk*</p>
<p><b>To potato ADD</b> Single Cream Vegetable or olive spread, Milk powder Grated cheese, Pesto, olive/vegetable oil, Salad Cream, Mayonnaise</p>	<p><b>To sandwiches ADD</b> Chutney, Cheese Cream cheese, Nut Butters, Jam*, marmalade*, Hummus, Pesto, Avocado, Mayonnaise, Salad Cream</p>	<p><b>To pasta and rice ADD</b> Vegetable or olive oils /spreads, Pesto, Grated Cheese Beans/Lentils, Chopped Boiled/ Scrambled egg</p>

## Examples of high calorie / protein snacks ideas:

### Savoury suggestions:

- Unsalted nuts and seeds
- Cheese and biscuits
- Crackers/crispbreads +/- dips and oils (see overleaf)
- Falafels and hummus/guacamole (see overleaf)
- Sandwich or toast with meat/fish/cheese/nut butter/jam/marmite
- Meat free cocktail sausages/ scotch eggs/sausage rolls
- Avocado on toast/snack breads
- Baked/lentil crisps +/- dips
- Savoury scone with vegetable/olive oil spread
- Olives (in olive oil)
- Oatcakes with dips (see overleaf)
- Mackerel or sardine fillets on toast
- Mackerel or salmon pate on crackers/crispbreads

### Sweet snacks:

- Scones with vegetable/olive oil spread and jam\*
- A small bar of dark chocolate/carob bar\*
- Rice pudding\*
- Custard\*
- Dessert mousse\*
- Thick and creamy yogurt\*
- Hot chocolate\*
- Hot malted drink\*
- Malt loaf with vegetable/olive oil spread
- Fruit toast or teacake with vegetable/olive oil spread
- Stewed Fruit\* and yogurt
- Dried fruit\* (e.g. apricots/banana chips)
- Crumpet/breakfast muffin with honey\* or jam\*

## Nourishing drinks:

It is important to drink enough fluid during the day. While fluids such as water and squash are hydrating they do not provide extra calories. Soups and milky drinks contain a good amount of energy as well as fluid. **If you are on a fluid restriction, make sure to incorporate these drinks as part of your restriction.**

Choose higher energy drinks where possible these include: *whole milk, smoothies\* or fruit juice\*, soups, milkshakes\*, milky coffees, hot chocolates\*, hot malt drinks and fizzy drinks\*.*

**Homemade milkshakes and smoothies:** If you are struggling with your intake, try making a tasty nourishing drink at home. See below for useful recipes:

### Fortified milk recipe

- 1 pint (570ml) full fat milk
- 5 heaped tablespoons dried milk powder

Mix ingredients until smooth in consistency. Use in tea/coffee/on cereal, and to drink.

Try adding yogurt, ice cream, pureed/frozen fruit\* or milkshake syrup\* for milkshake ideas.

### Smoothie recipes

#### Strawberry delight:

- 250ml milk
- 300g greek yoghurt
- 1 banana
- 1 large handful of frozen strawberries
- 1/4 avocado

#### Banana:

- 250ml milk
- 300g greek yoghurt
- 1 banana
- 1 handful of cashew nuts
- 1 teaspoon honey\*

Blend all ingredients together until thick and smooth consistency. Adjust to taste, add honey to sweeten.

## Oils and salad dressings:

Adding oil to salads and vegetables as a dressing, dipping in bread or flavouring pasta, and using oil generously during cooking are great ways to add energy to food. Examples of oils containing 'healthier fats' include *olive, extra virgin olive, walnut, sesame, flax, avocado, rapeseed (vegetable), and sunflower*. Please note that coconut oil is very high in saturated fat, and, although not of animal origin, can negatively affect your overall heart health. Therefore we would not recommend cooking with it or including it in your diet.

### Example salad dressing recipes:

#### Classic Vinaigrette:

Whisk two tablespoons red wine vinegar,  
two teaspoons mustard,  
1/2 teaspoon salt and pepper.  
Gradually whisk in 100ml of olive oil.

#### Honey and Mustard:

One garlic clove, crushed,  
two teaspoon Dijon mustard,  
two teaspoons runny honey,  
three tablespoons white wine vinegar,  
100ml of olive oil and 1/2 teaspoon of salt and pepper.  
Simply whisk all ingredients together.

#### Classic lemon and olive oil:

One tablespoon lemon juice,  
three tablespoons olive oil,  
1/2 teaspoon salt and pepper.  
Whisk together,  
taste and adjust seasoning.



## Dips

Having a dip with a meal or snack can boost your enjoyment as well as your energy and protein intake. Some ideas include:

### Guacamole:

Mash 1 ripe avocado in a bowl, add 1 diced tomato, mix in half a clove of garlic (crushed) and the juice of half a lime and 1/2 teaspoon of salt and pepper.

### Creamy avocado dip:

Mash 1 ripe avocado, stir in 2-3 tablespoons of natural yogurt.

### Tzatziki:

Grate 1/4 cucumber and mix well with 150ml natural yoghurt, 1 teaspoon of lemon juice, 1 tablespoon of olive oil, 1 teaspoon of dried / fresh mint and 1/2 teaspoon of salt and pepper.

### Garlic Cream Cheese Dip:

Mix 2 tablespoons of cream cheese, 2-3 teaspoons of whole milk, 1/2 teaspoon of garlic powder and 1/2 teaspoon pepper.

### Hummus:

To a food processor add 1 can of drained chickpeas, 1/2 garlic clove, 3 tablespoons of olive oil, the juice of 1/2 a lemon, 2 tablespoons of greek yoghurt, 1/4 teaspoon of cumin, 1/2 teaspoon of pepper, 2 tablespoons of tahini (optional) and 1tbsp of water. Blend until smooth. Add extra lemon juice/pepper/cumin to taste.

### Pesto:

To a food processor add 50g pine nuts, 80g basil, 50g grated parmesan cheese, 2 garlic cloves and 150 ml olive oil. Process until smooth and add black pepper to taste.

**If you continue to lose weight despite this advice, please speak with your GP or dietitian for further input.**

## Sample meal:

### Breakfast:

Porridge made with Full Fat milk and added fruit or nuts

Plus a Full Cream yoghurt OR

Scrambled/fried egg made with oil or vegetable spread on toast WITH

Fruit juice/smoothie\*

### Mid-morning Snack

One portion of cheese and biscuits

OR snack bread and hummus OR toast with nut butter WITH

Milky drink or smoothie\*.

### Lunch

Sandwich with meat/fish/vegetarian meat alternative with vegetable spread OR

Toast with 2 poached eggs and avocado OR

Jacket potato with beans/cheese WITH

Rice pudding\* /full fat yoghurt

### Mid-afternoon Snack

Milky drink or smoothie\* WITH

A portion of unsalted nuts/seeds

### Evening meal

An omelette with vegetables (add margarine) OR

Meat/fish with pasta/rice/potatoes with vegetables/salad WITH

Dessert mousse\*

**While in hospital choose the energy-dense (ED) options for added calories. Ask for snacks regularly on the tea rounds and extra puddings at meal times.**





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This leaflet is intended for patients receiving care in Brighton & Hove or Haywards Heath

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#### **Disclaimer**

The information in this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and is in no way intended to replace professional clinical advice by a qualified practitioner.

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