

High protein high energy eating in hospital

Why do you need a high protein, high energy (HPHE) diet?

When you are sick it is common to lose weight and/or muscle, and to require extra energy (calories) and protein to help with healing. This makes it important to eat foods high in protein and energy, especially if:

- you are underweight
- you are losing weight without trying
- you are unable to eat enough due to poor appetite or nausea (feeling sick)
- you have higher energy and protein needs

Your current energy & protein intake is:

- Adequate
- Inadequate

Your current nutritional state is:

- Well nourished
- Well nourished, but at risk of malnutrition
- Malnourished

Malnutrition or poor food intake can:

- Increase chances of infection and pressure injury (bed sores)
- Slow wound healing
- Increase length of time in hospital
- Increase chances of returning to hospital or long-term health placement
- Decrease quality of life
- Increased risk of falls and loss of strength
- Make it more difficult to return home and live independently

High protein foods include:

- Meat, fish, chicken and eggs
- Dairy products e.g. milk, cheese, yoghurt (including soy and lactose-free varieties)
- Beans, lentils, chickpeas, legumes, nuts and seed

- Meat alternatives e.g. tofu, vegetarian sausages, vegan mince
- Nutritional supplements e.g. Sustagen, Resource Plus, Ensure Plus (these are also high in energy)

High energy foods include:

- Full cream dairy products
- Margarine, butter, salad dressing, oil
- Soft drinks, cordial, chocolates, sweets, ice-cream
- High fat and/or sugar foods such as chips, shortbread, biscuits and cheese

You can improve your nutrition in hospital by eating high protein and energy foods and “making every mouthful count”. Your nutrition is an important part of your recovery – your meals are as important as your tablets!

Breakfast ideas

- Choose a high protein choice everyday (e.g. eggs, savoury mince)
- Add honey, sugar or cream to your porridge and coffee
- Add butter and spreads to your bread

Lunch and dinner ideas

- Eat the meat/meat alternatives and/or dessert before your vegetables (if your appetite is poor and you are unable to finish your meal)
- Add butter or margarine to the vegetables
- Add high energy sauces e.g. mayonnaise, gravy, barbecue sauce to your meals
- Add cream to your soup
- Ask for a double serve of the protein part of your meal
- Choose a sandwich as well as your hot meal or salad

Dessert

- Chose a dessert high in energy and protein instead of fruit and eat your dessert first if you are unable to finish your meal
- Order two or three dessert options
- Order a side of ice-cream, cream, or yoghurt
- Eat dessert as a snack between meals

Between meals

Snacks are very important when you are eating less at meals or have high nutrition needs.

- Ask for/order your favourite snacks e.g. cheese and biscuits, yoghurt, chocolate, chips
- Ask visitors to bring your favourite snacks
- Keep your snacks within easy reach
- Don't rely on your appetite – try to eat something every 2-3 hours.

Nutritious drinks

When your appetite is poor, it may be easier to drink than to eat. Choose nutritious drinks in place of water, tea, coffee

Nutritious drinks include:

- Plain or flavoured full cream milk
- Milo made on milk (hot or cold)
- Milkshakes, iced coffee
- Nutrition supplements e.g. Sustagen, Resource Plus, Ensure Plus

Hospital mealtimes

- Don't be afraid to ask for help with your meals! Staff (and family/friends) can help you complete your menu, open tricky food packages, cut up difficult food items and feed you if you are unable to feed yourself.
- Sitting out of bed (if possible) makes hospital mealtimes feel more "normal". Moving around and getting out of bed can help increase your appetite.
- Encourage visitors at mealtimes to make meals more enjoyable.
- If your appetite is getting worse or you are unable to choose high protein or high energy foods, please talk to your nurse or dietitian.

Dietitian: _____

Ward: _____