

A guide to eating well when following a low fibre diet

This dietary advice sheet gives some general information to help you make the recommended changes to your diet. If you need more detailed advice or if you are following a special diet that makes it difficult to make these changes, please ask your doctor to refer you to a registered dietitian.

Why do you need to eat well?

- Eating well prior to and after surgery will help you recover faster. Eating too little may affect your energy levels.
- If you have a poor appetite, you may have lost weight or be at risk of losing weight.
- Lack of protein, minerals and vitamins may make you more open to illness or delay the healing process.
- It is important that you eat a balanced diet, to provide all the necessary nutrients. These can be included in simple meals and snacks.

Meal Pattern

- Eating small, frequent meals and snacks during the day will be easier to manage than 3 larger meals especially if your appetite is poor.
- Aim for 3 small meals each day with 2-3 snacks or nourishing drinks in between.
- Meals and drinks should be high in calories and protein to meet your daily requirements.
- Drinks, snacks and meals can be fortified to make them more nutritious.

Protein Foods

Milk and Yogurt

- Aim for at least 568ml (1 pint) of milk a day
- Use whole (full cream/silver top) milk if you are at risk of losing weight.



Fortify milk by adding skimmed milk powder to increase the protein and calorie content. Whisk 4 heaped tablespoons (about 50g/2oz) skimmed milk powder into 568ml (1 pint) milk.

Use milk or fortified milk in your:

- Tea, coffee or other drinks, such as malted drinks and hot chocolate
- Milky puddings and custard and milk jellies
- On cereals (low fibre varieties, such as Cornflakes, Rice Krispies) and to make Ready Brek

- In savoury sauces, such as parsley or cheese
- Include a milk-based dessert, such as milk pudding or custard (homemade or “ready to eat”), milk jelly or “pot desserts” such as thick and creamy smooth yogurt (avoid those with fruit or nuts) and mousses. Use Greek yogurt with puddings.

Meat and Fish

- Include at least 75-100g (3-4oz) meat, chicken or fish (no bones) if you have a cooked meal.
- “Convenience meals” are a good standby to have in the fridge or freezer. Try fish in sauce, shepherds pie or lasagne.
- For a snack meal include smaller portions of meat or fish in a sandwich (use white bread) or on toast. Try a ham or corned beef sandwich or sardines on toast.



Cheese and Eggs

- Have a cheese or egg (poached, boiled scrambled or fried) meal for a change, such as cauliflower (no stalks) or macaroni cheese, quiche, scrambled eggs or omelette.
- For a snack meal have cheese or egg on white toast, cheese and plain white crackers, or cheese/egg sandwiches.
- Try making a cheese sauce to put with fish or white pasta, or use a packet sauce and sprinkle grated cheese on top.
- Grated cheese can be mixed into scrambled eggs, mashed into potatoes with extra butter or margarine, or sprinkled onto a bowl of smooth soup.



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High Calorie Foods

- Calories come from the protein foods we have already talked about. They also come from fats and oils, cream, starchy foods (white bread, potatoes – no skins, white pasta and white rice and breakfast cereals – low fibre varieties e.g. Cornflakes, Rice Krispies, Ready Brek) and sugar.
- Margarine, butter and oil are all fats and contain similar numbers of calories.
- Do not use “light” or low-fat spread if you are trying to increase your weight.
- Add lots of butter or margarine:
 - Spread thickly on white bread and crackers.
 - Mash into potatoes or melt on boiled.
 - Stir into hot white pasta or white rice and serve with a meat, cheese or white sauce.
- Roast potatoes and chips are high in calories and can be eaten as part of your diet.
- Add double cream to soups, sauces and puddings.
- Try adding sugar to drinks, breakfast cereals (choose low fibre varieties) or desserts.
- Add seedless jam, honey or syrup to plain cakes and scones (avoid those with fruit or nuts).



Fruit and Vegetables

- Whilst following a low fibre diet it is necessary to avoid the skins, pips and seeds of fruits and vegetables. Have well cooked vegetables and tinned fruit rather than raw ones.
- Examples of fruit: fruit juice, tinned pears/mandarins/peaches/apricots/grapefruit, stewed apples/pears, ripe bananas.
- Examples of vegetables: peeled boiled/mashed/roasted/fried potatoes, cauliflower or broccoli florets with no stalks, carrots, swede, parsnips, mushrooms, courgette, marrow or pumpkin with seeds.

- Use the ideas mentioned to add extra calories and protein to fruit and vegetables.
- It may be advisable to take a ‘1-a-day’ multivitamin and mineral supplement to help improve your diet.

Super Snacks

Below are some ideas for quick and easy snacks to have between meals. Those marked ☺ could be eaten instead of a meal if you do not have much of an appetite.

- ☺ Bowl of cereal (choose low fibre varieties e.g. Cornflakes, Rice Krispies, Ready Brek) with milk or fortified milk and sugar
- ☺ Cheese or sardines on white toast
- ☺ Cheese and plain white crackers
- ☺ Sandwiches (use white bread) of tuna, cheese or ham
- ☺ Bowl of smooth creamy soup and a white roll

Smooth yogurt/fromage frais/mousse or any other individual pot dessert (avoid those with fruit or nuts)

Toasted crumpets, muffins or scones – made from white flour (avoid those with fruit or nuts) with butter, seedless jam, honey or cheese

Sponge cakes made with white flour, without fruit or nuts

Milkshake. Try adding ice-cream for a “thick shake”

Malted drink made with milk and 2-3 plain biscuits (avoid those with fruit or nuts) e.g. Rich tea, Morning coffee, Marie.

