



**Royal Surrey  
County Hospital**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# **Eating well before your surgery**

## **Nutrition & Dietetics Department**

**Patient information leaflet**

## Who is this leaflet for?

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The information in this leaflet is for you if you have:

- A BMI less than 20kg/m<sup>2</sup>
- Lost weight without meaning to
- A poor appetite
- Lost interest in food
- Been missing meals

## Why is it important for me to eat well?

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It is important that you are well nourished and not unintentionally losing weight before your operation. This will assist the healing of your wounds, reduce the risk of infection as well as improving your general recovery. The tips in this leaflet are intended to help you make the right choices and ensure that you eat as well as possible.

## How often should I eat?

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If your appetite is poor you may find that your usual size portions are off-putting or difficult to manage. Aim to have three small meals and three snacks daily instead.

### Ideas for a daily menu:

#### Breakfast

- Bowl of cereal or porridge with:
  - Sugar, honey, syrup or jam
  - Full cream milk or cream
- And/or bread or toast with:
  - Thickly spread butter or margarine
  - Marmalade, jam or peanut butter
  - Bacon, egg, cheese or beans

## **Light meal**

- Sandwiches or jacket potato filled with:
  - Butter, spread or mayonnaise
  - Ham or cold meat or tinned fish
  - Paté or paste
  - Egg or cheese
- And/or soup with:
  - Milk powder
  - Greek yoghurt, crème fraîche or cream
  - Grated cheese
- And dessert e.g. thick and creamy yoghurt, mousse or ice cream

## **Main meal**

- Meat e.g. chicken casserole or Shepherd's pie
- Fish e.g. battered cod or fish in parsley or butter sauce
- Egg dish e.g. quiche or omelette
- Cheese e.g. macaroni cheese
- Fortify rice, potatoes, pasta or vegetables with:
  - Butter, spread or oil
  - Cream or cheese
- Dessert e.g. milk pudding, fruit pie or crumble, or sponge with custard

## **Mid-morning, afternoon or evening snack:**

Choose from sweet or savoury foods, or nourishing drinks listed overleaf.

## Which types of food can help?

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- Use milk generously.
- Have at least 1 pint of full cream, Channel Island, Jersey or gold top milk each day. Use in drinks, on cereals or to make milky puddings.
- Fortify milk by adding 2-4 tablespoons of milk powder to each pint. Mix a little milk with the milk powder to make a paste and then stir as you add the rest of the pint.
- Use evaporated or fortified milk to make custard, milk jellies and milk puddings.

## Sweet snacks for any time of the day

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- Milky puddings e.g. custard, rice pudding, sago
- Thick & Creamy or Greek yoghurt
- Small pots of fromage frais or children's yoghurts
- Chocolate desserts, trifles, or cheesecakes
- Fruit fools, mousses, instant whips or crème caramel
- Toast with plenty of butter or margarine and jam, honey, marmalade, lemon curd or chocolate spread
- Breakfast cereal with full cream milk and sugar, or you may find it easier to nibble on dry cereal
- Dried fruit e.g. raisins, cranberries, banana chips, papaya, mango
- Bite size snacks e.g. flapjacks, mini rolls, millionaire shortbread
- Sweet biscuits, especially chocolate or cream filled biscuits
- Cereal or chocolate bars
- Cakes, pastries, chocolate éclairs or doughnuts
- Plain scones, tea cakes or hot cross buns with butter, spread and jam

## **Savoury snacks for any time of the day**

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- Sandwiches with plenty of butter, margarine, mayonnaise or salad cream
- Mini sausage rolls, scotch eggs, quiches, pork pies
- Mini Indian or Chinese party selections e.g. samosas, onion bhajis, spring rolls
- Breadsticks, crisps or pitta bread with dips e.g. houmous, sour cream,
- Taramasalata or tzatziki
- Individual cheese portions or cheese strings
- Cheese straws
- Avocado
- Toast or crackers with plenty of butter, margarine and peanut butter, Marmite®
- Bovril®, paté, fish paste or smoked salmon
- Muffins and crumpets with butter or margarine and cheese
- Nuts and seeds

## **Nourishing fluids**

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It is desirable to include at least 8-10 cups/6-8 mugs of fluid per day to prevent dehydration. This may be rather a lot if you have a small appetite. Spread them evenly through the day and try not to drink with meals, as you may find this fills you up.

Choose nourishing drinks, such as:

- Cold milk, milkshake or yoghurt drinks
- Hot milky drinks e.g. coffee, hot chocolate, cocoa, malted milk, Ovaltine®
- Horlicks®

- Full sugar fizzy drinks or squash/cordial added to water or lemonade
- Fruit juices or smoothies, with added full cream milk, Greek yoghurt or ice cream
- Nesquik®, Crusha syrup® or Complan® Shakes (flavoured or unflavoured)
- High protein milkshakes e.g. Meritine®, Weetabix On The Go®, Ufit protein®, Up&Go®
- Build-up or 'gourmet' soups

## **How do I add extra nutrition to my food?**

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Add full cream milk, cream, crème fraîche, butter, spread, oil or cheese as extra energy to:

- Vegetables
- Soups
- Sauces
- Potatoes, pasta or rice

Add cream, evaporated milk, condensed milk, yoghurt, crème fraîche, custard or ice cream to add extra energy to:

- Puddings and desserts
- Fruit (stewed or tinned) or fruit pies
- Jelly
- Cakes and pastries



## Dietetic Department contact details

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If you have any questions about the information in this leaflet please contact the Dietetic Department at the address below:

### **Nutrition & Dietetics Department**

Royal Surrey County Hospital, Egerton Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 7XX.

**Telephone:** 01483 464119

**Fax:** 01483 464868

**Email:** [rsch.dietitians@nhs.net](mailto:rsch.dietitians@nhs.net)

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## PALS and Advocacy contact details

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Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

**Telephone:** 01483 402757

**Email:** [rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net)

**Opening hours:** 9.00am–3.00pm, Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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