

Nutritional supplements (SIP FEEDS)

Sip feeds may be prescribed to you by your doctor if all other steps to improve your nutritional intake have been unsuccessful.

Sip feeds are supplements to your usual meals and should be taken more than an hour before a meal, otherwise this may reduce your appetite.

Your relatives, carers and friends can help you by:

Trying not to interrupt you during meal times and ensuring meal times are protected.

Bringing you high protein drinks – these are readily available in Supermarkets.

Arranging to eat lunch or dinner with you socially, as being in the company of others may help you to eat more nutritious food.

Looking out for any further signs of weight loss or reduced appetite, and advising you to speak to your GP or community nurse about this.

References

- Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool (Bapen, 2005)
- British Dietetic Association www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/MalnutritionFactSheet
- NHS Choices www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Malnutrition/Pages/Introduction.aspx

Contact details

Guildford and Waverley Adult Community Nursing Team

Telephone: 0300 3034739

PALS and Advocacy contact details

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

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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Improving your nutrition – help for smaller appetites

Adult Community Health Services



Patient information leaflet

This guide contains information on the importance of nutrition and ways you can improve your dietary intake.

This guide is for you if you have:

- Recently lost weight
- Have a reduced appetite
- Lost interest in food
- Been missing meals

If you answer yes to any of the above, then it is important that you increase your nutritional intake.

Increasing your calorie and protein intake will help you regain strength during recovery from an illness, operation, after a period of time in hospital and during some medical treatments.

Good nutrition also helps to improve wound healing and mental wellbeing.

Do you need help?

Do you have difficulties with swallowing?

Over the last 3-6 months, have your clothes or jewellery become loose fitting or have you lost weight?

Over the last 3-6 months, has your food intake reduced or your appetite reduced?

Do you have an underlying illness or condition that is making it difficult for you to eat nutritious food?

What your GP and nurse can do to help

Initially, the community nurse will undertake a full assessment which will include asking you questions and observing for signs of weight loss and malnutrition.

This assessment will give a risk score for malnutrition and will be used to develop a plan of care with you.

As part of your care plan, the community nursing team will also monitor your weight at monthly intervals.

This will be done by either using your own weighing scales or by making a record of your upper arm measurement to estimate your weight.

If your risk of malnutrition is very high, or you are steadily losing weight, then the community nurse may refer you to your GP or community dietitian for further assessment and advice.

Eating nutritious food and drinking good amounts of fluid is important as this can help healing and to fight infection and give you the energy to feel better in yourself.

Ways that you can improve your appetite

If your appetite is poor, you may find that your usual portion sizes are off-putting.

You may be eating less than usual at mealtimes.

Here are some tips to help improve your appetite and your nutritional intake:

- Try to eat 'little and often' by having small portions at meal times with snacks in between meals.
- Snacks could include a small sandwich, sausage roll, nuts, raisins, biscuits, milky puddings, chocolates and cakes.
- Keep snacks by your bedside and near your usual seating area.
- Replace low fat food and drinks with full fat products. For example, replace semi-skimmed milk with full fat milk.
- Try eating extra portions of dairy products such as cheese, full fat yoghurt or custard.
- Try adding syrup, honey or jam to your cereal and add extra sugar to hot drinks.
- 2-4 tablespoons of dried milk powder can be added to a pint of milk and used to make your drinks, sauces, soups and puddings.
- High protein drinks are available in supermarkets and can be used to make milkshakes.
- Many supermarkets have their own brand of protein drinks. Well known brands include Complan and Build-Up.

Please speak to your community nurse for further recipe ideas to increase your nutritional intake.

If you have diabetes or kidney problems, then it would be advisable for you to contact your GP, Specialist Nurse, Consultant or dietitian for further advice.