

High protein high energy diet 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 and protein to help with healing. This makes it important to eat high protein and energy foods, especially if:

- you are underweight
- you are losing weight without trying
- you are unable to eat enough due to poor appetite or nausea
- you have increased energy and protein requirements

Malnutrition or poor food intake can:

- Increase chances of infection and pressure injury (bed sores)
- Delay wound healing
- Increase length of time in hospital
- Increase chances of returning to hospital or long-term health placement
- Decrease quality of life

Your current energy & protein intake is:

- Adequate Inadequate

Your current nutritional state is:

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

High protein foods include:

- Meat, fish, chicken and eggs
- Dairy products e.g. milk, cheese, yoghurt (including soy and lactose-free varieties)
- Beans, legumes, nuts and seeds
- Meat alternatives e.g. tofu, vegetarian sausages
- 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 diet is an important part of your recovery – your meals are as important as your tablets!

Dietitian: _____

Phone number: _____

Breakfast ideas

- Choose a high protein choice everyday (e.g. eggs, savoury mince)
- Add cream to your porridge and coffee

Main course ideas

- Eat the meat/meat alternatives and/or dessert before your veggies (if your appetite is poor)
- Add butter or margarine to the veggies
- 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

- Order two or three dessert options
- Order a side of ice-cream, cream, or yoghurt

Between meals

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

- Ask the dietetic assistant/dietitian for your favourite snacks e.g. cheese and biscuits, yoghurt, chocolate, chips
- Ask visitors to bring 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.

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
- Choose nutritious drinks in place of water, tea, coffee

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 aren't up to feeding yourself.
- Sitting out of bed (if possible) makes hospital mealtimes feel more "normal". Moving around and getting out of bed can help your appetite.
- Encourage visitors at mealtimes to make meals more enjoyable. Ask about meal times on your ward as they can vary from ward to ward.
- If you are eating less than half of your meal over a few days, please talk to your nurse or dietitian.