



## Patient Information Leaflet: *Food First* – Improving Your Dietary Intake

### Why have you been given this leaflet?

You have been given this leaflet because you, or someone you are caring for, are experiencing some or all of the following: *losing weight, a poor appetite, are not eating enough, are underweight, or have pressure sore(s).*

The advice given in this leaflet is to help *you* eat for *your* health. This is not the same as the healthy eating advice for the general public. Normal healthy eating guidelines do not apply to you because you are currently unwell and are either suffering from malnutrition or are at risk from malnutrition.

### Simple ways to improve dietary intake (*Food First*)

- ❖ **Eat little & often, rather than large amounts in one go** – aim for 3 small meals and 2-3 snacks or nourishing drinks per day.
- ❖ **Choose high calorie versions of foods & snacks** - whether you cook from scratch or have ready meals, *try to avoid low fat or low calorie products.*
- ❖ **Have full fat dairy produce** – whole milk (with a blue top), full fat cheese and yoghurts.
- ❖ **Protein is essential for repair & healing** – have foods and snacks high in protein. Examples include dairy produce, fish, meat, well cooked eggs, nuts, lentils, beans, soya & *Quorn.*
- ❖ **Are you drinking enough?** – Try to have 6-8 tall glasses/large mugs of drink every day. Sip fluids little & often if you are struggling to drink. This is important for your general health but is even more essential if you have pressure sores - and it also helps to prevent constipation.
- ❖ **Make the most of any food or drink that you have by *fortifying* them.**

#### How to fortify foods and drinks:

**Fortified milk recipe:** mix 3-4 tablespoons of dried skimmed milk powder in to a pint of whole (blue top) milk and use this in breakfast cereal/foods and drinks throughout the day

**To savoury foods add:** cream, butter or margarine, grated or cream cheese, full fat Greek natural yoghurt, mayonnaise, or other high calorie dressing, creamy sauces, olive oil, humus, avocado, peanut butter

**To sweet foods add:** cream, condensed or evaporated milk, skimmed milk powder, custard, ice cream, sugar, jam, honey, syrup, maple syrup, grated chocolate, dried fruit (***avoid adding sugary foods if you have diabetes***)

**Meal & Snack Ideas – Remember to *fortify* them**

**Main Meals/Lunches**

- ❖ If you are struggling to prepare meals or don't have the energy to cook a meal from scratch, buy ready meals and **fortify them using the ideas overleaf.**
- ❖ Avoid the diet or low calorie versions

**Here are some suggestions that are either quick to prepare or available as ready meals:**

- ❖ cottage pie/Cumberland pie (vegetarian and meat versions)
- ❖ corned beef hash
- ❖ fish pie
- ❖ pasta meals in a creamy/cheesy sauce, e.g. lasagne, macaroni cheese
- ❖ curries, stews/casseroles
- ❖ beans and cheese on toast
- ❖ cheesy jacket potato with beans
- ❖ tuna mayonnaise in jacket potato
- ❖ thick soups with grated cheese & butter, served with bread
- ❖ well cooked eggs on buttered toast/bread
- ❖ a high calorie sandwich – add a creamy sauce to your favourite filling - e.g. mayonnaise, cream cheese, avocado, peanut butter

**Snacks/Puddings**

- ❖ cereal/porridge with *fortified milk* recipe
- ❖ peanut butter, pate or chocolate spread on toast or bread
- ❖ cheese & crackers
- ❖ handful of dried fruit and nuts
- ❖ humus on crackers/toast
- ❖ mini sausage rolls or spring rolls
- ❖ mini scotch eggs
- ❖ mini pork pies
- ❖ slice of quiche
- ❖ samosa/pakora
- ❖ cake & cream/custard/ice cream
- ❖ milk puddings with added cream e.g. rice pudding, angel delight
- ❖ trifle
- ❖ chocolate/fruit mousses
- ❖ full fat / thick & creamy yoghurts
- ❖ small bar of chocolate and glass of *fortified milk*
- ❖ tinned fruit & ice cream (or evaporated milk or cream)
- ❖ tea cake or crumpets & butter
- ❖ egg custard tart
- ❖ glass of *fortified milk* with a biscuit or mini sponge cake

## Nourishing Drinks

Have these in between meals. For milky drinks, use the *fortified milk recipe* overleaf.

- ❖ **Hot Milky Drink** e.g. Coffee/*Ovaltine*/Hot Chocolate – make entirely with *fortified milk* & add extra cream - or just hot *fortified milk* on its own if you prefer
- ❖ **Creamy Soups** - or cuppa soups made with *fortified milk* rather than water
- ❖ **Milkshakes** – buy ready-made ones or make up your own using the *fortified milk* and adding your favourite flavoured yoghurt/ice cream and fruit (blend to smooth)
- ❖ **Simple Milkshake** – add *Nesquick/Crusha* syrup/Supermarket brand milkshake powder or syrup to *fortified milk* and mix well
- ❖ **Fruit Smoothies** – either shop bought or make your own if you are able. Blend your favourite fruits in a blender with fruit juice (**avoid fruit smoothies if you have diabetes** )
- ❖ **Over the Counter Supplement Drinks** – you may wish to buy these – e.g. *Complan* or *Build Up*. They are available at most chemists and supermarkets and are available in savoury (soups) and sweet (milkshake) versions

## Other practical things you can try to improve your oral intake

- ❖ **Try to avoid drinking large amounts with your meals** as this can fill you up and result in you eating less.
- ❖ **Avoid smoking before you eat** as this can reduce your appetite.
- ❖ **A small amount of alcohol before you eat can help to increase your appetite** – check with your doctor if it is safe for you to drink alcohol.
- ❖ **Going for a walk/getting some fresh air (however short) before you eat**, can help to increase your appetite.
- ❖ **You may just find chewing tiring** - if so, opt for softer foods with or without sauces.
- ❖ **Try not to skip meals** but if you find your appetite is better or you are more alert at certain times of the day, concentrate on eating and drinking the best you can during those times. If you have a main meal of the day, choose a time that is best for you.
- ❖ **If you really are struggling to eat meals, opt for what you really fancy or can cope with** – worry less about the quality of your diet. Talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist about purchasing an over the counter vitamin and mineral supplement. You do not need to buy a branded version – the pharmacist in your local chemist or supermarket can advise you on the products available.

### Symptoms Affecting Oral Intake or Appetite

- ❖ **Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhoea** - talk to your GP, nurse or pharmacist to enable them to consider whether medication or other advice may help.
- ❖ **Constipation** - try to ensure that you are drinking enough and include more fibre in your diet – e.g. wholemeal bread, porridge, high fibre breakfast cereals, fruit and vegetables, beans and pulses. If you are still struggling, talk to your GP, nurse or pharmacist about a suitable laxative medication.
- ❖ **Sore mouth** - try avoiding foods and drinks that are too hot or too cold, salty or acidic (such as vinegar or citrus fruits) or foods that are sharp or bitter. Having softer foods and adding a sauce to them can also help make eating more bearable.
- ❖ **Swallowing problems** – tell your GP if you or someone you are caring for are finding it hard to swallow food or drinks, and are experiencing any of the following symptoms, as you may need a swallowing assessment:

*Coughing with or after meals/drinks, frequent chest infections, holding food/drink in the mouth, pocketing food in the cheeks, drooling, food/drink coming out of the nose, choking episodes.*

### Meals on Wheels

If you are unable to cook a meal, Milton Keynes Council offers a Community Hot Meals Service (Meals on Wheels). You or a relative can contact *Milton Keynes Adult Social Care Access Team (ASCAT)* for more information. Anyone is eligible (i.e. you don't have to meet any criteria) and the current charge is £5.33 per hot meal (including a dessert). The company they use is *Apetito*. Contact the Council in the first instance:

Tel 01908 253772 or email: [ascat@milton-keynes.gov.uk](mailto:ascat@milton-keynes.gov.uk)

Some companies offer a frozen meal delivery service in a range of portion sizes, textures and diversity, including:

<i>Wiltshire Farm Foods:</i>	Customer Helpline 0800 773 773
<i>Oakhouse Foods Ltd :</i>	Customer Helpline 0845 643 2009
<i>Mrs Gill's Kitchen</i>	Customer Helpline 0208 807 6584

### Milton Keynes Food Bank

If you are struggling to buy food, the Food Bank may be able to help you. It operates from various *Serving Centres* in Milton Keynes. You will need to obtain a voucher from one of the referral agencies – e.g. Citizens Advice Bureau, Social Services, family centres, doctor's surgeries and schools. This voucher entitles you to a food parcel. For more information, contact:

Tel 01908 322800 or email: [thefoodbank@mkcc.org.uk](mailto:thefoodbank@mkcc.org.uk)

**This leaflet should help you to improve your oral intake and your weight. If you are struggling to follow this advice or are still losing weight, speak to your GP or nurse as you may need to be referred to see a dietitian.**

