

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

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Barts Health
NHS Trust

Patient information

Gaining weight the healthy way

Nutrition and Dietetics Department

Name:

Date:

Dietitian:

Contact Number:

Hospital Site:



1. Introduction

This booklet provides information and useful tips on gaining weight. This is often advised because you have lost weight or are losing weight due to an illness and/or treatment.

This booklet explains the different types of fat in our diet and focuses on healthier fats to achieve weight gain as well as other high energy nourishing foods and drinks.

Getting a balanced diet is still important to make sure you are getting all the vitamins and minerals your body needs.

The Eatwell Guide



Source: Public Health England in association with the Welsh government, Food Standards Scotland and the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland, 2016.

The Eatwell Guide shows the different types of foods that you should include in your diet and the proportions you should have for a healthy diet.

7. Food Fortification ideas

Fortification is when small quantities of foods such as milk powder, oils or cream are added to food to increase the calories without increasing the portion size. You can add healthy fats during cooking and food preparation.

For an extra **100-150 calories** add:

- 1 tablespoon of olive, vegetable or sunflower based spread / oil to mashed potato, vegetables or sauces e.g. curry sauce.
- 2 tablespoons of pesto to mashed potato or pasta.
- Melt grated cheese into potatoes
- A handful of seeds or nuts to yoghurt, porridge, salads.
- 1 tablespoon of mayonnaise to mashed potato or with eggs.
- 1 tablespoon of peanut butter or chocolate spread to a milkshake or spread on crackers / biscuits.
- 1 tablespoon of olive oil based salad dressing to salads.
- Skimmed milk powder can be added to scrambled eggs, omelette, mash potatoes, milk puddings, soups etc.

Fortified Milk

Skimmed milk powder can be added to milk to increase the calories and protein.

- 1 pint (570mls) whole milk
- 4 heaped tablespoons (60g) of skimmed milk powder

Mix milk powder with some milk to make a runny paste and add to the rest of the milk. Aim to use 1 pint of fortified milk per day.

Fortified Soup

Soups are often low in protein and energy. To make them more nourishing you can:

- Prepare packet soups with fortified milk instead of water.
- Add 4 teaspoons of skimmed milk powder.
- Add beans, peas, lentils or pasta.
- Choose more creamy soups and avoid diet or clear soups.

5. Light meal ideas

- Omelette, with bread/toast. Add extra butter, fortified milk and a tablespoon of milk powder to egg mixture. Extra cheese or ham etc. could also be added.
- Beans on toast.
- Sandwiches. Fill with cold meats, cream cheese, boiled egg. Add sauces, pickles and relish.
- Tinned ravioli or macaroni cheese with vegetables.
- Packet savoury rice. Add fresh meat, cheese or pulses. Add butter, margarine or oil.
- Cauliflower cheese with vegetables.
- Tinned tuna or salmon mixed with condensed mushroom soup. Serve with cooked pasta or jacket potato.
- Jacket potato with cheese, tuna mayonnaise, baked beans, sandwich fillers or egg mayonnaise.
- Quiche with coleslaw

6. Nourishing drinks recipes

Nourishing drinks can be useful between meals. Other drinks such as tea and coffee fill you up without giving extra energy and protein.

Smoothies

200mls (1/3 pint) fortified milk

Tub (150g) Greek or whole milk plain yoghurt

Fruit e.g. banana, mango, strawberries

2 teaspoons honey

Fruit Shake

200mls (1/3 pint) fortified milk

75g (3oz) soft fruit e.g. strawberries, blackberries, apricots, banana

2 scoops (2oz/50g) ice cream or tub (150g) fruit yoghurt

Coffee Calypso

200mls (1/3 pint) fortified milk

1 scoop (120g) ice cream

1 teaspoon instant coffee

2 teaspoons sugar

Your meals should roughly be made up of:

- **1/3 starchy food**
(e.g. bread, pasta, potatoes, rice).
- **1/3 vegetables.**
(Although vegetables provide essential nutrients, they are low in calories so fortify these foods where possible).
- **1/3 protein food** (e.g. meat, fish, eggs, beans, Quorn™, tofu).

2. Basics of weight gain

In order to gain weight you need to increase the amount of food you eat and include as much energy and nutrition into every mouthful to make the most of your meal, especially if you have a small appetite.

Aim to eat 3 meals and 3 snacks a day

- Have at least 3 small meals per day.
- Eat a little of what you fancy – choose your favourite foods often!
- Avoid skipping meals.
- Keep snacks close by and plan your meals ahead of time.
- If you are too tired or unable to cook microwave or oven ready meals or tinned foods

Make the most of your food

- Fortify meals by adding oils and spreads to mashed potato, bread, soup, vegetables, meat/fish to increase the calories. (Section 7)
- Try to have at least one fortified dish at each meal.
- Avoid diet and low calorie products at present – you can return to these once your weight is stable.
- Drinking with meals can make you feel fuller quicker – instead drink after your meal or between meals.

3. Types of Fat

Diets high in fat are often linked to high blood cholesterol levels which can lead to heart disease. However fats are very useful in helping people to gain weight as they are energy dense and so you don't have to eat large portions to get all the calories that your body needs.

To protect our hearts but still achieve weight gain, it is important that we look at the type of fat and get the right balance in our diet.

Avoid ✗	Eat less ✗	Eat more ✓	Eat more ✓
Trans fat	Saturated Fat	Polyunsaturated Fat	Monounsaturated Fat
Increase cholesterol in blood	Too much increases LDL (bad) cholesterol in your blood	Provides essential fatty acids that protect heart health e.g. Omega-3 fats	Help lower LDL (bad) cholesterol in your blood.
Hydrogenated oils e.g. cakes, biscuits + takeaways.	Solid fat e.g. Butter, lard, ghee, hard cheese, fatty + processed meat.	Fish, corn oil, sesame oil, soya oil, nuts and seeds, sunflower seeds, walnuts	Avocado, olives, rapeseed and olive oil, almonds, cashew nuts, hazelnuts, peanuts

- If you have diabetes, please discuss with your dietitian regarding suitable options.

4. Snack ideas for weight gain

It is important to have regular meals with additional snacks between meals. You roughly need to increase your energy intake by 500 calories every day to achieve a 1lb / 0.5kg weight gain a week. Here are some nutritious, high energy snack ideas:

100-150 calories	50g dried fruit 200ml glass fruit smoothie 1 pot full fat yoghurt 3 dates Handful unsalted nuts ½ tin creamed rice pudding or custard
150 – 200 calories	250ml glass full fat milk 200ml glass of lassi 1 flapjack with oats / nuts / fruit 2 slices malt loaf
More than 200 calories	30g cereal + 125ml full fat milk Porridge with full fat milk and dried fruit 75g plantain crisps 50g potato / cassava crisps 2 oatcakes / crumpets / slices seeded bread 1 bagel

Suggested toppings for bread, crumpets etc:

- 1 teaspoon of olive, vegetable or sunflower oil based spread.
- 1 tablespoon of peanut butter.
- 2 heaped tablespoons of houmous.
- ½ tin of oily fish (e.g. sardine/salmon/mackerel).
- ½ avocado.
- 30g full fat cheese spread
- ½ tin of tuna with full fat mayonnaise.
- 1 boiled eggs with full fat mayonnaise.