

Tips for When Eating and Drinking Is Difficult

This factsheet is for people with kidney disease who can't eat or drink enough due to symptoms

When your kidneys are not working well you might experience different symptoms. Some of these symptoms can make it hard to eat and drink enough. Some common symptoms include:

- Nausea
- Loss of appetite
- Taste changes
- Dry mouth
- Feeling full after only eating a small amount of food

You might experience unwanted weight loss if you can't eat enough food. This can cause you to lose your muscles or strength. If you are unable to eat enough food, you should choose foods that have a lot of **energy** and **protein**. This is because you only need small amounts of these foods to get more nutrition.

What is energy? Energy is the calories or kilojoules in food and is what your body uses to stay alive and active. Foods that have a lot of energy include grains, dairy, oily fish, nuts, seeds, avocado, oil and unsalted butter or margarine.



What is protein? Protein is what your muscles are made of. Protein helps to build or repair new muscles and skin. Foods that have a lot of protein include meat, poultry, fish, dairy, cheese, eggs, nuts, tofu, legumes and lentils.



The following advice will help you to manage symptoms that stop you from eating enough, as well as how to make your meals nourishing. Once you can eat enough your dietitian may advise you to stop following this diet and return to your normal eating.

This is general advice only. See a dietitian to get personalised advice.

Tips to add extra energy and protein to different foods:

Grains and cereal foods:

- Choose wholemeal or wholegrain cereal, pasta, bread or rolls
- Add cream to your cereal, porridge or congee
- Add honey, nut butter or unsalted nuts on top of your cereal, porridge or congee
- Add an extra spread of butter/margarine, nut butters or avocado to your toast
- Add butter/margarine and oil to cooked rice, pasta and noodles.
- Make fried rice using lots of oil

Dairy foods:

- Choose full cream dairy products
- Add extra cheese on top of pasta, sandwiches, soups and salads
- Add yoghurt, sour cream or cream to soups and curries
- Choose creamy sauces for pasta like carbonara or alfredo
- Add cream cheese, ricotta or cottage cheese on top of crackers or toast

Meat or alternative protein foods:

- Add cream and cheese into omelettes or scrambled eggs
- Fry your eggs in oil instead of poaching or boiling
- Crumb your meat or fish and shallow fry in oil
- Choose oily fish like tinned tuna and salmon in oil or sardines
- Dip falafels into hummus or tzatziki
- Add beans, lentils, tofu or tempeh into your vegetarian meals

Fruit:

- Dip pieces of fruit in nut butter
- Add cream or custard to fresh or tinned fruit
- Blend frozen fruit into a smoothie with honey, oats, nuts/nut butter, cream and milk

Vegetables:

- Add lentils or tinned beans to your salads, curries, soups and pasta
- Use extra oil or salad dressing on top of your vegetables
- Bake your vegetables using lots of oil
- Add hummus, pesto or tzatziki to raw salad vegetables

Nourishing snack ideas that are high in energy and protein:

- Muesli bars
- Piece of toast with butter, peanut butter, jam or honey
- Yoghurt with honey and nuts/seeds
- Crackers topped with avocado, cheese, tinned fish, or hummus (or other dips)
- Tinned fruit with custard or cream
- Fresh fruit dipped in nut butter (peanut butter, almond butter)
- Handful of raw or dry roasted nuts
- English muffin or crumpet with ricotta or cottage cheese, or other toppings
- Rice pudding
- Falafel dipped in hummus or labneh
- Fruit smoothie with yoghurt, honey, frozen fruit and milk
- Toasted cheese sandwich
- Hardboiled eggs



Tips if you are unable to make your own meals:

If you are unable to make your own food due to fatigue or other symptoms, you can:

- Make simple foods that require little preparation. Like eggs on toast.
- Eat your biggest meal when you have the most appetite or energy. For example, you can have your biggest meal of the day at lunch time.
- Keep pre-prepared or frozen meals in your freezer for times when you don't have the energy to cook.
- Use meal delivery services such as The Dinner Ladies, YouFoodz, Lite N Easy, Delidoor or Meals on Wheels. If you have a home care package, you should speak to your provider about paying for some of the costs.

YOUFOODZ
Lite n' Easy



Meals on Wheels
Australia

délidoor.
TAKE DINNER OFF YOUR PLATE

**This advice is based on clinical requirements. NSW Health does not endorse one brand over another*

Tips to manage symptoms which stop you eating enough:

Nausea:

- Choose cold foods that do not have strong smells like smoothies, sandwiches or salads
- Choose foods that require less preparation or cooking like baked beans on toast
- Choose bland or plain foods like bread, rice, pasta, noodles

Loss of appetite or feeling full quickly:

- Eat at regular times or set an alarm to remind you to eat during the day
- Try to eat every 2-3 hours, you should keep a stock of snacks in the cupboard for in between meals
- You should have smaller meals more often, such as having six small meals instead of three big meals
- Avoid drinking liquids at the same time as your meal
- You should eat whenever you are hungry, even if that is in the middle of the night
- If you are constipated this can make you feel full. If you feel constipated talk with your doctor or dietitian about how to best manage this

Taste changes:

- You can add extra flavour to your food using lemon, lime, chilli, herbs, spices, honey, garlic and onion
- Brush your teeth and use lip balm to keep your mouth moist and clean

Dry mouth:

- Keep your lips moist with a lip balm and use alcohol free mouth wash such as Aquae spray or Biotin
- Suck on ice, frozen fruit, mints, sour lollies or chewing gum to help make more saliva

Dietitian Suggestions:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Patient name:

Date:

Dietitian name:

Dietitian contact details: