Top tips to improve your appetite

- Eat what you enjoy
- Tasty snacks between your meals
- The power of protein
Do you have a poor appetite?

Have you lost weight without meaning to?

Are you feeling tired and low in energy?

If so, follow the simple steps in this booklet for 12 weeks to help rebuild your strength and appetite.

Losing weight, having a reduced appetite (under nutrition) or being dehydrated are not part of ageing and should not be dismissed simply as ‘old age’ as they can make you ill.

If after 12 weeks of trying some of the suggestions in this booklet you are still concerned or losing weight or if you have sudden weight loss please contact your GP.

Ask your dentist to prescribe high fluoride toothpaste to help keep your teeth strong if you are increasing your sugar intake.

Please note

If you have a medical condition that requires a special diet for example diabetes, coeliac disease, kidney or liver disease, inflammatory bowel disease, ask for more tailored individual advice from your GP and to be referred to a Dietitian.
Boost your appetite!

A small amount of fresh air before meals can help stimulate an appetite.

Drink after meals rather than before to avoid feeling too full or bloated.

If you smoke try to give up or avoid smoking for 30 minutes before your meal. This will improve your taste buds and appetite.
Eat little and often

If you find it hard to eat a big meal that’s ok, just eat little and often. 6 small meals are as good as 3 big meals!

Top tip

See page 18 for ideas for a weekly meal planner with 6 small meals per day!
It is important to have small regular meals and snacks in between.

Remember you can go back for seconds.

Finger foods can help you to eat well.

Have puddings or desserts at least once a day – if you are full after a meal wait 30 minutes before having pudding.

Try to eat more on the days or the times during the day when you feel more like eating, e.g. if you are most hungry in the morning, try having a bigger breakfast.

Try to eat every 2–3 hours even if it is only something small.

“I’ve started eating my main meal at lunch time as my appetite is better then, I also eat my meals from a side-plate as it feels more manageable than sitting down to a big plate of food.”

Alf, Stockport
Snacks and finger foods

It is a good idea to include snacks between your meals, especially if you are only managing small meals or your appetite is poor.

Top tip
Eating higher energy snacks, such as peanut butter on toast will really help give you a boost.

“My favourite afternoon snack is malt loaf with butter and jam, it gives me extra energy.”

Dorothy, Manchester
### Ideas for tasty snacks...

#### Sweet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cakeobject</th>
<th>Cake</th>
<th>Cake bars</th>
<th>Cereal bars</th>
<th>Chocolate biscuit bars</th>
<th>Chocolate éclairs</th>
<th>Chorley cakes</th>
<th>Custard pot</th>
<th>Doughnuts</th>
<th>Dried fruit/nuts</th>
<th>Eccles cakes</th>
<th>Egg custard tarts</th>
<th>Flapjacks</th>
<th>Fruit smoothies</th>
<th>Individual trifle</th>
<th>Jam/Bakewell tarts</th>
<th>Mousse</th>
<th>Rice pudding</th>
<th>Scones with cream and jam</th>
<th>Toasted tea cakes with butter</th>
<th>Yoghurts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Savoury

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cerealo</th>
<th>Cereal</th>
<th>Cheese</th>
<th>Cheese on toast</th>
<th>Chicken drumsticks</th>
<th>Crackers with butter and cheese</th>
<th>Crisps</th>
<th>Crumpets with butter</th>
<th>Fingers of toast with pate</th>
<th>Garlic bread and cheese</th>
<th>Malt loaf with butter</th>
<th>Mini crackers</th>
<th>Nuts</th>
<th>Pancakes with butter and jam</th>
<th>Pasties</th>
<th>Pork pies</th>
<th>Sandwiches</th>
<th>Sausage rolls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

If you are struggling with tiredness, these snacks are also perfect to have as finger foods at meal times.

Don’t forget to get some high-fluoride toothpaste if you are increasing your sugar intake.
Boost your food

Adding some easy extras to your food is a great way to improve your energy. This can make a big difference to your appetite.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boost your savoury foods</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>When you eat these...</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mashed potatoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scrambled eggs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sauces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bread, scones or chapatti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Top tip

Adding cheese to your mashed potato is not just tasty, it helps boosts your calorie intake too.
Add some treats to your sweet foods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When you eat these...</th>
<th>try adding these</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Porridge or other cereal</td>
<td>Honey / sugar / evaporated milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stewed and tinned fruit Fruit pies Cake</td>
<td>Custard / evaporated milk / double cream / ice cream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot drinks</td>
<td>Milk powder / sugar / evaporated milk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milky puddings</td>
<td>Honey / jam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“I’ve switched to using full-fat milk, which I prefer anyway, and always add cream to sauces, soup and puddings.”

Ali, Rochdale
The power of protein

Protein can help to keep you strong. Include meat, fish, poultry, vegetarian alternatives, lentils, pulses, beans, eggs and nuts in your diet.

Try high protein toppings on your toast such as sardines, scrambled egg, cheese, beans or peanut butter.

Add extra pieces of meat or tinned lentils into soups, casseroles, stews or pies.

Try eating oily fish like salmon, herrings, sardines or trout once a week.
Fortified milk recipe

You can double the protein content and increase calcium intake of milk by following the recipe below. This fortified milk can be used in place of ordinary milk. Aim for 1 pint a day.

INGREDIENTS
• 1 pint full-fat milk
• 4 tablespoons milk powder

INSTRUCTIONS
• Add a little bit of the milk to the milk powder in a jug, mix into a paste
• Add the rest of the milk and stir well
• Pour back into the bottle or use from the jug

Top tip

Use this in hot drinks such as tea, coffee, malted milk drinks or hot chocolate. Also great as a cold drink, on cereal, in sauces or in custard.

“I love milky drinks with chocolate biscuits as a snack or before I go to bed.”

Eric, Salford

Buy a tub of skimmed milk powder to use for fortified milk and in sauces or soup.
Too tired to cook?

Even if you are not feeling up to cooking there are lots of ways to make sure you are still eating healthy and filling meals.

Buy full-fat ready meals and snacks to heat in the microwave.

Get meals delivered to your home: Wiltshire Farm Foods, Meals on Wheels, Oak House Foods, ICare and voluntary organisations can provide these.

Get shopping delivered to your home - most supermarkets do home delivery.

You might find it useful to find out about local food banks/food voucher schemes.

“When I’m too tired to cook in the evening, I pop a creamy curry in the microwave, it’s quick and easy.”

Margaret, Oldham
Top tip
Keep your kitchen cupboard and freezer stocked up with some simple, tasty foods. These ideas will provide you with easy and quick meals and snacks in no time...

Ideas for your kitchen cupboard
• Breakfast cereal and porridge.
• Jam, marmalade, peanut butter and honey.
• Baked beans, macaroni cheese and spaghetti.
• Tinned stews, meats, fish and lentils.
• Tinned vegetables and fruit – add butter or cream to these.
• Tinned custard, sponge and custard and rice pudding.
• Long life milk (whole milk) and skimmed milk powder.
• Horlicks, Ovaltine and drinking chocolate – make with fortified milk for extra calories.
• Squash and fruit juice.

Ideas for your freezer
• Instant/ready meals, e.g. cottage pie, fish pie, roast dinner.
• Fish fingers, sausages and burgers.
• Frozen vegetables, frozen fruit e.g. mixed berries.
• Boil in the bag meals, e.g. fish in sauce.
• Full-fat ice cream and ice lollies.
• Frozen desserts, e.g. jam roly poly, crumbles, gateau, sponge and chocolate puddings.
Eat together

Getting together with friends, family and neighbours is a fun way to spend time and enjoy a meal.

Make plans to eat with a friend or family whenever possible.

Join a lunch club with a local voluntary organisation.

If you are feeling lonely or have experienced a bereavement, reach out to organisations who can help put you in touch with other people.

Top tip

Your local Age UK is here to help, contact us to find out how to meet others.
Eat well

Enjoy your food and have plenty of variety in your diet so you will get all the nutrients you need and maintain a healthy weight.

The Eatwell Guide shows how much of what you eat overall should come from each food group (download from www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-eatwell-guide)

“Joining a lunch club helped me to enjoy food again. I have learnt tips about how to eat well when living on my own.”

Ernest, Bury
Stay hydrated

Drinking plenty throughout the day helps improve skin, concentration, balance, memory, energy and mood.

Keep a water bottle with you.

Sip water continuously throughout the day.

It doesn’t have to be water; other drinks also count.

Try to have milky drinks made with fortified milk.

Aim for 6–8 drinks per day (200ml each – a normal cup or glass size).

Have ice lollies, soups and milky drinks for variety and extra energy.

If you worry about going to the toilet at night, drink more earlier in the day.

If you are struggling to drink, have ice lollies, jellies, creamy sauces, custard and extra milk in cereal.
Look after your mouth

If your mouth or teeth are sore, or your dentures don’t fit properly, eating and drinking can become difficult.

- Brush natural teeth twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste, speak to your dentist if you are finding this difficult.
- If you feel you have a dry mouth, your doctor, dentist or pharmacist can give you saliva replacements.
- Avoid sugary food or drink after brushing your teeth.
- Visit your dentist at least once every year and ask about fluoride varnish and high fluoride toothpaste.
- If you have an ulcer or lump in your mouth for more than 3 weeks see your dentist straight away.

Cleaning your dentures

- Clean your denture with liquid soap and a nail brush and rinse well with water.
- Soak in clean water overnight or use a denture soaking solution.
## Weekly Meal Planner – 6 small meals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Breakfast</th>
<th>Mid-morning snack</th>
<th>Lunch</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Porridge with fortified milk and honey</td>
<td>Eccles cake</td>
<td>Bowl of soup with cream, buttered bread. Full fat yoghurt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Scrambled egg on toast</td>
<td>Scone with butter and jam</td>
<td>Ham and cheese or cheese and onion toastie. Chocolate mousse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Cereal with milk (fortified)</td>
<td>Chocolate eclair</td>
<td>Quiche, coleslaw and potato salad. Trifle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Crumpets with butter and jam</td>
<td>Mixed berries and yoghurt</td>
<td>Cheese on toast. Individual frozen apple strudel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Boiled egg and toast</td>
<td>Flapjack</td>
<td>Ploughman’s Lunch. Custard tart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturday</td>
<td>Bowl of porridge with fortified milk and honey</td>
<td>Banana</td>
<td>Ham and cheese or cheese and vegetable omelette. Bakewell tart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday</td>
<td>Blueberry pancake and syrup / honey</td>
<td>Chocolate or custard biscuits with milky coffee</td>
<td>Sunday Roast. Fruit pie</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Have a drink after each meal or snack, choose from water, squash, fruit juice, milk, tea, coffee, hot chocolate, malted milk drinks, etc.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mid-afternoon snack</th>
<th>Evening meal</th>
<th>Supper</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Slice of cake</td>
<td>Jacket potato, beans and cheese. Fruit salad with cream / custard</td>
<td>Cheese and crackers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malt loaf and butter</td>
<td>Corned beef hash or lentil cottage pie. Apple crumble and custard</td>
<td>Hot malted milk drink and chocolate bar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrot sticks and hummus</td>
<td>Chicken or vegetable casserole. Rice pudding with jam</td>
<td>Bowl of cereal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pork pie or sausage roll</td>
<td>Chicken or vegetable korma and rice. Jam roly poly and custard</td>
<td>Hot malted milk drink and toast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strawberry milkshake</td>
<td>Fish, chips and mushy peas. Cake and custard</td>
<td>Fruit loaf and butter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samosa</td>
<td>Bacon and broccoli pasta bake. Bread and butter pudding and custard</td>
<td>Handful of nuts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual cake e.g. lemon cake</td>
<td>Mini buffet: cocktail sausage, onion bhaji, pork pie, scotch egg. Cake and custard</td>
<td>Milky hot chocolate with cream and marshmallows</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Don't forget to get some high-fluoride toothpaste if you are increasing your sugar intake.

Have a drink after each meal or snack, choose from water, squash, fruit juice, milk, tea, coffee, hot chocolate, malted milk drinks, etc.
For more information contact your local Age UK

**Bolton:** 01204 382 411  
**Bury:** 0161 763 9030  
**Oldham & Rochdale:** 0161 633 0213  
**Manchester:** 0161 833 3944  
**Salford:** 0161 788 7300  
**Stockport:** 0161 480 1211  
**Tameside:** 0161 308 5000  
**Trafford:** 0161 746 9754  
**Wigan Borough:** 01942 241972  

**General contact:**  
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0161 728 2001

“Using this booklet really helped me with my shopping list.”

Elsie, Bolton