

Good food and healthy eating advice for older people living independently

An information booklet for older people, their families and carers



The aim of this booklet is to

- Raise awareness about the risks of malnutrition in older people
- Give some useful tips about healthy eating
- Provide information about the benefits and availability of Meals on Wheels

As we get older, illness, personal circumstances and life events can all have an impact on the quality and quantity of the food we eat. If you find yourself or someone you are caring for losing weight, missing meals or if you are worried that you or they are not eating properly this booklet may help. Our aim is to help you eat well and ensure that you are well nourished.

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What is Malnutrition

Malnutrition is when you are not eating enough of the right foods to meet what your body needs. This means that you may not be getting enough nutrients such as proteins, vitamins or minerals that you need to stay well. Being malnourished can make you ill as your body does not work as well as usual. Being ill can also lead to malnutrition as this often results in poor eating habits.

Common Signs of Malnutrition

Things to look out for:

- Tiredness and lethargy
- Frequent illnesses and infections
- Slow wound healing
- Difficulty in keeping warm
- Lack of strength and low energy when it comes to doing your normal daily activities
- Changes in your skin and nails
- Loss of appetite – skipping meals and snacks regularly
- Low mood and poor concentration



What can lead to Malnutrition?

If you have one or more of the following difficulties you may be at risk of malnutrition.

Underweight

Loss of weight

Fighting an infection

Recovering from surgery

Recovering from an illness that is healing

Being ill or being in hospital

Recovering from breaking one of your bones

A leg ulcer or a wound

Sore mouth or throat

Finding it difficult to go shopping or to cook meals

Losing a loved one or someone close to you

Feeling lonely or isolated

Forgetting to eat or shop for food

Unable to cook due to lack of physical ability or knowledge

Finding it hard to make ends meet

Weight Loss

Losing weight as you get older is not always good for you. It is a good idea to be the best weight you can possibly be because:

- You are less likely to fall if you have some muscle
- If you fall, body fat will help protect you from injury
- If you cannot eat for a few days, your body fat is a good reserve of energy for you

You may be surprised to know that being a little overweight helps to protect older people from the effect of illness and injury

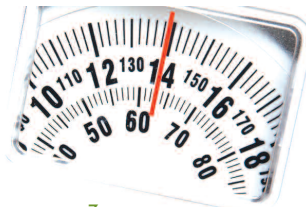
How do I know if I am Losing Weight?

You can check if you are losing or have lost weight by asking yourself the following questions:

- Have I unintentionally lost 4lbs/2kgs?
- Is my ring slipping off my finger?
- Does my belt or clothing feel looser?
- Is my wrist watch sliding up my arm?
- Is my bracelet falling off my hand?
- Are my dentures loose and does this make it harder to eat and talk?

It is a good idea to keep a record of your weight

(There is a weight record chart on pages 16 and 17 which will help you with this).



Meals on Wheels

Meals on Wheels can help you maintain a healthy diet. Following a hospital stay or a period of illness it is very important to eat well as this aids recovery and recuperation and will get you back to health quickly. Meals on Wheels are a great way to ensure that you eat a balanced diet.

Meals can be tailored to medically related dietary needs, for example if you have diabetes, coeliac disease, or if you are on a renal diet. Meals on Wheels can also cater to your personal preferences. Following an illness you may be unable to shop and therefore Meals on Wheels can be a short term option until you are back feeling well again.

**Includes
main course
and soup
or dessert**

**Medically related
dietary
requirements
catered for
(diabetes, coeliac
disease, renal, etc.)**

**Personal
preferences
catered for.
Small, medium
or large portion
sizes available**

**Consistency
modified meal
options:
Cut Up Dinner,
Moist & minced
dinner**

**Short or long
term options
available.**

TOP TIP

Call Community Catering on **091 700800** to find out more about the service and to try a free sample meal. Meals on Wheels can help your recuperation following an illness.



Eating a Balanced Diet

In order to ensure you are drinking and eating well each day, try to follow these simple guidelines:

Am I drinking enough?

- Drink at least 6 to 8 glasses or mugs of fluid each day. This helps with concentration, keeps your kidneys healthy and helps to avoid constipation.
- Having a variety of hot and cold drinks that you like will encourage you to drink more.

TOP TIP

If you find that you drink slowly, use an insulated mug to keep your drink hot or cold.



Am I eating enough of the right foods?

- Eat **protein** foods in at least 2 of your meals each day. Ideally include 2 or 3 portions of high protein foods every day such as meat, chicken, turkey, white fish, oily fish, eggs, nuts, beans, pulses, soya, or Quorn. These foods help keep the muscles and immune system strong. Meals on Wheels will help ensure that you have a balanced diet with adequate protein intake.



Examples of protein portions

Main meal portion

Beef, pork, lamb
3-4oz (75-100g)

Chicken or turkey
3-4oz (75-100g)

Oily fish (trout, herring,
salmon, sardines, mackerel)
3-4oz (75-100g)

White fish 4-6oz (100-170g)

Quorn 3-4 oz (75-100g)

Tofu 3-4 oz (75-100g)

Light meal portion

1 slice of cooked beef pork
or lamb

1 thick slice cooked
Chicken, or turkey

1 small tin of fish

1-2 eggs

3 tablespoons of beans
or lentils

2 tablespoons of peanut
butter or nuts





Choose healthy **fats** such as vegetable, olive or rapeseed oil for cooking and salad dressings.



Include three portions of **dairy food** each day, such as cheese, milk or yoghurt.

Look out for fortified dairy foods which have additional calcium and vitamin D to help keep your bones healthy.



Eat a **starchy/carbohydrate food** at each of your three main meals, for example 2 slices of bread, 1 bowl of cereal, 1 medium or two small size potatoes, 1 cup of cooked pasta or rice. These foods are good for energy.



Eat some **fruit and vegetables** every day and if possible aim for five portions for example, 1 medium piece of fruit, 2 or 3 tablespoons of fruit salad, 6 or 8 strawberries, grapes, 2 tablespoons of raw, cooked, frozen or canned vegetables. These foods are good for fibre, vitamins and minerals.

TOP TIP

Frozen fruit and frozen vegetables are just as nutritious as fresh ones



Tips on how to add more Calories to your Food

For a healthy diet we usually advise people to limit foods high in fat and sugar. However, when your appetite is poor, you have lost weight, or you are malnourished, fat and sugar can help to improve your energy intake without adding volume that you might not manage. If there are any health concerns which have previously required you to limit fat and sugar in your diet such as diabetes or high cholesterol, you should discuss this with your GP or a qualified dietitian.

Food fortification is a term used for when we add small quantities of everyday foods, such as cream, skimmed milk powder or butter or sugar to a food dish in order to increase the nutritional content. This means that every mouthful you eat has more calories in it than usual.

Tips for fortified drinks

- Use full cream milk
- Use double whipping cream, not single cream
- Use fortified milk and skimmed milk powder to add extra nutrition.
- Try to have 2 fortified drinks each day. This is particularly important if you have recently been on prescribed nutritional supplements.

Fortified Drinks

Fortified milk recipe

4 tablespoons of dried skimmed milk powder

1 pint of full fat milk / 600 ml

Mix the milk powder into the milk. Keep in the fridge and use in drinks, sauces, puddings and on cereal.

Nutritious milkshake

7 fl oz of full fat milk / 200 ml

2 heaped tablespoons of dried milk powder

Milkshake powder to taste

Mix together with a hand whisk or fork and drink or pop into the fridge for later.

Fortified yoghurt drink

This makes two portions:

5 fl oz of milk / 150 ml

1 heaped tablespoon of milk powder

Pot of thick and creamy yoghurt

Mix everything together with a hand whisk or fork.

Fortified soup

7 fl oz of milk / 200 ml

1 packet of cup-a-soup

1 heaped tablespoon of milk powder

Add hot water and mix as usual.

Fortified fruit smoothie

This makes two portions:

10.5 fl oz of milk / 300 ml

1 heaped tablespoon milk powder

1 pot of thick and creamy yoghurt

1 banana (or fruit of choice)

Liquidise all your ingredients together.

Fortified tea or coffee

5 fl oz of milk / 150 ml

1 tablespoon of milk powder

1 teaspoon of your usual tea or coffee powder

Mix with 2 tablespoons of cream.

Fortified hot chocolate

5 fl oz of milk / 150 ml

1 heaped tablespoon of milk powder

3 tablespoons of hot chocolate

2 tablespoons of cream

TOP TIP

You might find that your appetite is at its best early in the day. Make the best of this by having a very nutritious breakfast and a substantial mid morning snack.

Mealtime ideas...

Breakfast

Try to have a piece of fruit or a glass of fruit juice with your breakfast every day.

Ensure that you are using fortified milk in all your cereal and drinks.



- Quick cook porridge with fortified milk, cream and honey or golden syrup. To really balance this add a glass of fruit juice and a portion of fruit and if you enjoy them, add 2-3 dessert spoons of mixed milled seeds to your porridge.
- Cereals mixed with high fibre cereal, with full fat milk, a dollop of thick and creamy yoghurt and a mixture of berries.
- 2 scrambled eggs (made with fortified milk) on wholemeal toast with baked beans and cheese.
- Cereal that you enjoy with warm fortified milk, chopped banana and a glass of juice followed by fortified tea or coffee.
- 2 slices of wholemeal bread, 1 slice of bacon, 1 sausage, all grilled with cherry tomatoes, mushrooms, or beans.



Mealtime ideas...

Main Meal of the Day

TOP TIPS

- If you still enjoy cooking, but do not want to do it every day, it can be useful to cook 2 portions at a time and put one away for the next day or freeze it.
- Meals on Wheels... order a few meals and put some in the freezer.
- You may find that over time your taste has changed. Using stronger flavours such as lemon, black pepper garlic, spices and herbs can really make the difference to helping you enjoy your meal. These may not be ingredients that you have liked in the past but as your taste changes you may find that stronger flavours make it much more enjoyable.
- Frozen vegetables are a good option, particularly if you are cooking for one. It also helps this to ensure that you are having plenty of variety.

Main meal ideas

- Salmon/trout/mackerel with lemon, black pepper with mixed frozen veg and boiled potatoes or rice.
- Grilled pork chops with mashed potatoes, carrots and peas.
- Fish in sauce, ready in individual portions with boiled potatoes, broccoli and cauliflower.
- Shepherds pie made with lean beef or turkey mince including mushrooms, carrots and peas on the side or in the pie.
- Beef casserole made with lean diced beef and frozen mixed vegetables, onions and stock cube. Have this with potatoes on the side or already cooked in the casserole.



Mealtime ideas...

Light Lunch or Teatime Ideas

Have a piece of fruit and a yoghurt/rice pudding or custard with your meal.

- Creamy vegetable/lentil or chicken soup with brown bread, cold chicken or cheese.
- Baked beans on wholemeal toast with cherry tomatoes.
- Turkey, chicken, tuna or egg and tomato sandwich on brown or wholemeal bread.
- Omelette with potatoes, tomatoes, onions and cheese and a little chopped ham.

TOP TIP

When you have a meal of soup and bread, it is important to ensure that you also have some meat, fish, chicken, eggs or beans with this to ensure you have had a balanced meal.



Mealtime ideas...

Snacks to have in addition to your Main Meals

- Scone with jam and butter and milky tea or coffee
- Milky tea or coffee with a slice of cake
- Hot chocolate and toast with butter and jam
- One bar of chocolate with milky tea or coffee
- Sponge with full fat custard
- Pot of thick and creamy yoghurt and a glass of fruit juice
- Rice pudding with jam
- Muffin or cereal bar
- Stewed, chopped or tinned fruit with thick and creamy yoghurt

- Small bowl of cereal with milk
- 2 plain digestive biscuits
- Handful of nuts - any kind you enjoy
- A packet of raisins or handful of figs or dates
- Rice cakes with cheese, peanut butter or hummus
- Milky tea or coffee with cheese on toast or beans, scrambled eggs or peanut butter,
- Sandwich with egg or tuna with mayonnaise
- Bowl of lentil, bean or creamy soup with 2 slices of bread and butter



Handy things to keep in your store cupboard - in case you can't get out to the shops

In your cupboard	In your fridge	In your freezer
<p>MILK/DAIRY</p> <p>Long life milk, and a tub of powdered milk</p> <p>Cans or pots of custard and rice pudding</p>	<p>Eggs, full fat milk</p> <p>Thick and creamy yoghurts</p> <p>Chocolate mousse and other desserts</p>	<p>Ice cream and frozen yoghurt and litre of semi-skimmed milk</p>
<p>DRINKS</p> <p>Hot chocolate, malted milk drink, squash, enriched with vitamin C</p>	<p>Full fat milk, cream, butter, cheese</p>	
<p>MEAT, FISH AND ALTERNATIVES</p> <p>Fish: tins of tuna, salmon, sardines and mackerel</p> <p>Meat: canned meat, ready-made stews, casseroles, mince or pies</p> <p>Beans: baked beans, chickpeas, kidney beans</p>	<p>Slices of good quality cold meat</p> <p>Chicken breasts, individual chops, individual steaks</p>	<p>Fish fingers</p> <p>Ready meals such as stew, chicken casserole, lasagne, or fish pie</p> <p>Frozen meat, Quorn and frozen fish portions</p>

In your cupboard

VEGETABLES
Cans of vegetables and tins or cartons of all types of soup

FRUIT
Dried fruit, pots of fruit long life pure fruit juice

STARCHY FOOD
Starchy food, brown bread or soda bread
Crackers, crisp bread, plain biscuits, oat cakes
Individual portions of quick cook rice or pasta
Instant potato mash

In your fridge

Vegetables (ready chopped for ease) including salad vegetables
Baby potatoes, potatoes for baking or mashing

Fresh in season fruit to taste the best it can

Baby potatoes, potatoes for baking or mashing

TOP TIP
Cook potatoes on the double and use leftovers

In your freezer

A variety of frozen vegetables, handy mixes are: cauliflower and broccoli, baby carrots, mixed vegetables
Frozen chips, mashed, roasted and baked potatoes

Extra portions of home-made meals

Bread and rolls
Frozen jacket potatoes, oven chips
Frozen chips, mashed, roasted and baked potatoes
Meals from Meals on Wheels



Date	Weight

Date	Weight

LUNCH CLUBS

for older people



COPE Galway

Let's help together



EAT WELL

MAKE FRIENDS

JOIN YOUR COMMUNITY

Our Lunch Clubs are community based and provide a weekly social outlet where older people get together for an afternoon to enjoy a nutritious meal, make new friends and have lots of fun. Lunch Clubs are run by local volunteers and are catered by COPE Galway Community Catering at a cost of €6 per person for a two-course meal.

Area	Venue & Contact	When
Westside	Westside Resource Centre Nichola Tierney 091 589861	1pm – Every Wednesday
Mervue	St James' GAA Hall Tina Cunningham 091 753402	1pm – Every Thursday
Ballybane	New Life Centre, Monivea Road John Cleary 085 1048330	1pm – Every second Tuesday
City Centre	Croi na Gaillimhe Resource Centre, Millstreet Loyola King 091 895203	1pm – Every Wednesday
City Centre	6 Ely Place, Sea Road Noelle Jennings 086 0237022	1.30pm – Every Thursday
Renmore	Aras Naofa, adjacent to Church 086 4520482	1pm - Every Tuesday
Salthill	Adjacent to church 091 523413	1pm – Every Friday

For more information or if you would like to know more about starting a Lunch Club in your area please contact Noelle Jennings on 086 0237022.

If you need further information or help in relation to nutrition talk to your GP or Public Health Nurse.

For additional copies of the booklet you can contact communitycatering@copegalway.ie

This booklet was produced by Edel Mannion, Galway University Hospital, Geraldine Ryan & Anne Kenny COPE Galway, Community Catering Meals on Wheels and Aisling Snedeker registered dietitian and was funded by the Nursing and Midwifery Planning and Development Unit, HSE West Mid-West.



COPE Galway Community Catering – Meals on Wheels 091 700800

(Community Catering will also provide contact numbers for Meals on Wheels across County Galway).

Useful Numbers in Galway

Galway University College Hospital
091 544544

Merlin Park Hospital Galway
091 751131

A shopping list for choosing nourishing food

SHOPPING LIST

- 1LT FULL FAT MILK
- DRIED SKIMMED MILK POWDER
- FULL FAT YOGURTS x 4
- BANANAS
- FROZEN BERRIES
- VEGETABLE OIL
- WHOLEMEAL BREAD
- POTATOES
- TINS OF PEAS
- TINS OF BEANS
- MIXED NUTS
- HIGH FIBRE CEREAL
- SALMON DARTNE