

Diet and oesophageal cancer - Building Yourself Up

It's important to eat and drink enough calories and protein to maintain your weight and strength. The following information is designed to give you advice on adding extra calories to everyday foods if you have a reduced appetite or are losing weight:

- Eat little and often. Try having small, regular meals and snacks. Six small meals are as good as three large main meals.
- Make the most of opportunities when you feel hungry for example: eat a larger meal when you feel hungry.
- Drinks can be filling, have small amounts with meals and larger, more nutritious drinks, in between (see the 'nourishing fluids' section below for ideas)
- Use ready meal or meal delivery services if you find cooking meals reduces your appetite, increases fatigue or puts you off eating.
- Choose a variety of foods. Alternating what you eat can help keep things interesting.
- Liquid food supplements can also be helpful to increase your calorie and protein intake - ask your dietitian for advice on this- many are available on prescription and there are lots of brands.

Food Fortification

Food fortification involves adding higher energy and protein foods to your meals and snacks to increase the nutrient density of your meal, without significantly increasing the overall volume of food. Foods which are commonly used for fortification are listed below. If you are diabetic speak to your healthcare team for advice that will be suitable for you.

Sweet Options

- Double Cream
- Condensed Milk
- Full fat spreads or syrups e.g., jam, chocolate spread, nut butter, honey, golden or maple syrup
- Yoghurt
- Ice-cream
- Skimmed milk powder/fortified milk

Savoury Options

- Butter
- Olive oil
- Table sauces e.g., mayonnaise
- Cheese
- Skimmed milk powder/fortified milk
- Salad dressings
- Houmous

Fortified Milk

Fortified milk can be made up and stored in the fridge like you would with standard milk. This can then be used in place of your usual milk for example on breakfast cereals, porridge and in hot drinks.

It can also be used during cooking for example in savoury sauces, mashed potatoes, custards and milk-based puddings.

Fortified Milk Recipe:

Add four heaped tablespoons of skimmed milk powder to 500ml of full cream (whole) milk. Whisk until smooth.

Nourishing Snacks

Snacks are a great way to increase your nutritional intake between your meals and they don't

require much preparation or cooking. Try to include 2-3 nourishing snacks a day between your meals. We have outlined some ideas below:

If you can manage a normal textured diet:

- Cheese or pâté and crackers
- Tinned fruit with cream, ice cream or custard
- Handful of nuts eg peanuts or cashews
- Crumpets with butter or margarine and topped with jam or cheese
- Pancakes with cream
- Slice of quiche
- Teacakes or malt loaf- Add butter or spread and top with marmalade or jam and clotted cream
- Scotch eggs
- Cocktail sausages

If you require a softer consistency diet:

- Mousse/custard/thick and creamy yoghurts/rice pudding/angel delight
- Tiramisu
- Panna cotta/crème- caramel
- Porridge/Ready Brek®
- Cheesecake (Without the biscuit base if you struggling to swallow this)
- Smooth Hummus/smooth Pate
- Cake or sponge puddings
- Scrambled egg
- Omelette with ham or cheese
- Chocolate

- A mug of creamy soup

If you are following a puree consistency diet:

- Smooth yogurts (choose thick and creamy versions)
- Pureed fruits with honey and full fat yoghurt/fromage frais/double cream (fruit may need sieving)
- Ice cream
- Custard pots
- Pureed rice pudding (no bits)
- Mousse
- Mug of smooth creamy soup
- Any of the nourishing pudding or fluid recipes shown below
- Smooth blended cereals e.g., Ready Brek® or Weetabix made with fortified milk
- Smooth pates or savoury mousse
- Hummus (with no lumps)
- Very soft cheese e.g., cottage cheese/cream cheese, smooth with no lumps
- Pureed egg mayonnaise/scrambled egg
- Angel delight or instant whips made with fortified milk
- Cake blended with custard/cream
- Mousse/fools
- Crème- caramel
- Pannacotta

Nourishing Puddings

Puddings can be an enjoyable way to add extra calories and protein into your diet. In addition to the ideas listed above, we have put together some quick and easy recipe ideas for nourishing puddings or snacks that you can try:

Fortified instant dessert (four servings)

Ingredients

1 instant dessert packet (Angel Delight)
4 tablespoons milk powder
150ml double cream
150ml full cream milk

Method

1. Whisk all ingredients together with a fork or a whisk.
2. Leave to set.

Cake and ice cream chill (one serving)

Ingredients

1 slice sponge cake
1 scoop ice cream
60 to 125ml full cream milk

Method

1. Blend the sponge cake and ice cream together until smooth

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2. Add milk as required, until it is suitable consistency. You can add single cream instead of milk for extra calories.

Egg custard (four servings)

Ingredients

4 medium eggs
100g caster sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
500ml full cream milk
Pinch of nutmeg

Method

1. Mix together the eggs, sugar and vanilla extract.
2. Gradually stir in the cold milk.
3. Sprinkle on the nutmeg.
4. Pour mixture into one large or four smaller ovenproof dishes.
5. Cook at 200°C or gas mark 6 for 45 minutes (or until set).

Banana cream (three servings)

Ingredients

280ml whipping cream
3 ripe bananas (peeled)
2 tablespoons (heaped) caster sugar
1 lemon (juice and grated rind)

Method

1. Whisk the cream until thick.
2. Blend the bananas with the sugar, grated lemon rind and lemon juice.
3. Combine the banana mixture with the cream.
4. Chill until set.

Lemon mousse (three servings)

Ingredients

- 150g lemon curd
- Zest of ½ a lemon
- 150ml of double whipping cream

Method

1. Put two-thirds of the lemon curd in a large bowl with the zest and cream.
2. Beat with an electric whisk until it holds its shape.
3. Dribble over the rest of the lemon curd, marbling the curd as you add it.
4. Transfer into small pots or glasses. Cover with clingfilm and freeze for 30-40 minutes until set.

Nourishing Fluids

Including nourishing fluids are a good way to add extra calories and protein into your diet. Try to have your nourishing fluids after meals to avoid filling yourself up before you eat. The fortified milk recipe above can be used in hot drinks such as tea and coffee, smoothies or milkshakes or added to cereal and porridge.

Each of the following recipes makes one serving (unless specified otherwise):

Nourishing coffee

- 150ml full fat milk
- 1 heaped tablespoon milk powder
- 1 teaspoon coffee powder
- 2 tablespoons of cream

Nourishing malt drink

- 150ml full fat milk
- 1 heaped tablespoon milk powder
- 3 teaspoons of malted drink powder such as Ovaltine or Horlicks
- 2 tablespoons cream

Berry and cream shake

Ingredients

100g full fat fruit yoghurt
100ml cranberry juice
5 tablespoons double cream
1 tablespoon strawberry milkshake powder

Method

1. Blend until smooth.

Per serving: 583kcal and 6g protein

Fruit blast

Ingredients

100ml fresh fruit juice
100ml lemonade
1 scoop ice cream or double cream
1 tablespoon sugar

Method

1. Stir ingredients together.

Per serving: 273 to 387kcal and 0.5 to 2.5g protein

Banana oatmeal smoothie (vegan)

Ingredients

1 medium to large banana (peeled)
250ml unsweetened plant milk of your choice
(rice, soy, almond or coconut)
25g instant oats, quick cook oats or regular
oats (whichever you prefer)
1 tablespoon maple syrup
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon (ground)
1 tablespoon peanut butter

Method

1. Blend until smooth.

Per serving: 386kcal and 12g protein

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Updated 31 July 2024

Chocolate hazelnut dream

Ingredients

200ml whole milk
2 tablespoons condensed milk
2 tablespoons double cream
2 tablespoons hazelnut chocolate spread
1 tablespoon dried milk powder

Method

1. Whisk together all the ingredients.
Per serving: 621kcal and 12g protein

Basic fruit smoothie (four servings)

Ingredients

400g/14oz tinned peaches or other tinned fruit
150ml/5fl oz double cream
175g/6fl oz thick, creamy yoghurt
1 scoop ice cream
400ml/13fl oz apple juice

Method

1. Blend until smooth.
Per serving: 349kcal and 3.5g protein

Chocolate peanut butter smoothie (vegan)

Ingredients

500ml coconut water
1 tablespoon golden syrup
2 ripe bananas (peeled)
2 small avocados (peeled)
1 tablespoon cocoa powder
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 tablespoons smooth peanut butter

Method

1. Blend until smooth.
Per serving: 481kcal and 8g protein

You can ask your doctor or specialist nurse to be referred to a specialist dietitian for more personalised advice and support. See our website for more information on 'eating when swallowing is difficult' for soft and puree texture diets if you are struggling to swallow a normal consistency diet.