

## Useful and reliable resources

Self referral to Healthy Knowsley or Healthy St Helens:

[www.nwbh.nhs.uk/healthy-knowsley](http://www.nwbh.nhs.uk/healthy-knowsley)  
[www.healthysthelens.co.uk](http://www.healthysthelens.co.uk)

Dragon boating: [www.pooloflife.net/](http://www.pooloflife.net/)

British Dietetic Association: Food Fact Sheets:

[www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/home](http://www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts/home)

Roy Marsden cook book: [breastcancer.org/about-us/news-personal-stories/recipes-royal-marsden-cancer-cookbook](http://breastcancer.org/about-us/news-personal-stories/recipes-royal-marsden-cancer-cookbook)

[www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/causes-of-cancer/diet-and-cancer/what-is-a-healthy-diet](http://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/causes-of-cancer/diet-and-cancer/what-is-a-healthy-diet)

[breastcancer.org/information-support/facing-breast-cancer/living-beyond-breast-cancer/your-body/healthy-eating-after-treatment-breast-cancer](http://breastcancer.org/information-support/facing-breast-cancer/living-beyond-breast-cancer/your-body/healthy-eating-after-treatment-breast-cancer)

[www.cancerdietitian.com/](http://www.cancerdietitian.com/)

Whiston Hospital  
Warrington Road,  
Prescot, Merseyside, L35 5DR  
Telephone: 0151 426 1600

St Helens Hospital  
Marshall Cross Road,  
St Helens, Merseyside, WA9 3DA  
Telephone: 01744 26633

 /sthknhs  @sthk.nhs  
[www.sthk.nhs.uk](http://www.sthk.nhs.uk)



St Helens and Knowsley  
Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Trust

## Nutritional Advice for the Enhanced Recovery After Surgery Programme Breast School

This leaflet can be made available  
in alternative languages / formats on request.

如有需要，本传单可提供其他语言/版式  
此單張的其他語言/格式版本可按要求提供

Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać udostępniona  
w innych językach/formatach.

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## Introduction

The aim of an 'Enhanced Recovery After Surgery Programme' is to get you back to full health as quickly as possible after your surgery.

'Enhanced Recovery After Surgery' has been shown to speed up recovery and reduce complications.

One element of an Enhanced Recovery programme is nutrition.

We ask patients to take an active part in their recovery and this leaflet aims to provide general nutritional advice for before and after your surgery to help you do this.

## In the weeks/days before your operation

It is important that you try to keep up a good appetite and intake of food, as eating well before an operation can help improve your recovery in the following ways:

- Promotes wound healing
- Improves immune function
- Reduces your risk of infection
- Provides energy to get you moving post-op

Eating should be as important as any other treatment or medication you are receiving. It is a positive step that you can take to help your recovery.

## If you are eating well and have not lost weight unintentionally

You do not need to make any changes to your diet before your surgery, just continue to eat as normal, unless you have been advised to follow a special diet by your medical team.

Please avoid crash/fad diets if you are concerned about being overweight as these may compromise your nutritional status and potentially impair your recovery.

## A healthy well balanced diet - The Eatwell Guide

A healthy, well balanced diet like that outlined in the Eatwell Guide can provide significant overall health benefits like reducing your risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes and some other types of cancer.

Eat a rainbow by including different varieties and colours of fruit and vegetables daily in your diet for overall good health and to help with weight control.

If consumed, keep your intake of red/processed meat to 70g per day or less as these food can be high in saturated fat and salt.

## Healthy weight

Being a healthy weight (defined as having a Body Mass Index (BMI) between 18.5 - 24.9kg/m<sup>2</sup> . For Asian populations between 18.5 - 22.9kg/m<sup>2</sup>) can help prevent post-menopausal breast cancer and 11 other common cancers, as well as other conditions such as Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.

## Exercise

Aim for 150 mins / week of moderate intensity physical activity **or** 75 mins/week of vigorous intensity physical exercise **and** resistance training 2 or more times/week.

For mental and physical health benefits such as breast cancer prevention, improved muscle, bone and joint strength.

## If after a few weeks at home:

- Your appetite has not improved
- You are losing weight
- Your wound is not healing
- You are following a special diet i.e. diabetic/crohns etc and would like further support
- You have recovered well and would like some support with weight loss

.....ask your GP/Macmillan nurse for a referral to see a Dietitian.

## Hormone Therapy continued...

Hormone therapy may increase “bad cholesterol” - help reduce your blood cholesterol by cutting down on saturated fat, eating plenty of fruit, vegetables and cholesterol lowering foods like oats, beans and pulses. Keeping to a healthy weight and shape and being physically active can also help lower bad cholesterol levels.

## Fatigue

Fatigue can impact on dietary intake.

Seek support with meal preparation, use ready meals, try online shopping.

Download the free Cancer Related Fatigue app, “Untire”, for further support.

## Dispelling Myths

Soya is safe to consume as part of a healthy balanced diet for those living with and beyond breast cancer.

Avoid any special “cancer”, “dairy free” or “sugar free” diets which can be harmful to health, costly, time consuming and are not supported by robust scientific evidence. Instead follow a healthy well balanced diet.

## Diet and breast cancer links

There is no one particular food that can prevent breast cancer or reduce the risk of reoccurrence. Focus on consuming a healthy well balanced diet to help achieve and maintain a healthy weight and potentially prevent weight gain, all of which can help reduce the risk of post menopausal breast cancer along with being physically active.

## If you have unintentionally lost weight or have a low appetite

The aim is to ensure you are nutritionally fit and well to aid your recovery.

You should try and eat a diet that is as nourishing as possible, until your appetite returns.

This will reduce the risk of you becoming undernourished, which can lead to:

- Increased risk of picking up infections
- Slower wound healing
- Higher risk of tissue breakdown/pressure ulcer development

Muscle loss which can affect:

1. General mobility
2. Poor concentration levels and depression

## Achieving a nourishing diet

You should try to eat little and often, aiming for 4 to 6 small meals and snacks throughout the day.

Try to eat more at the time of day when your appetite is best and avoid filling up on liquids just before or during a meal.

You need to make the most of the small amounts that you are eating by following these suggestions:

- Have high calorie and high protein foods and avoid those labelled ‘low-fat’ or ‘diet’
- Add extra butter, cream, cheese and milk to foods
- Have a pint of full cream milk (blue label) every day in cereals and drinks
- Have protein rich foods such as meat, chicken, fish, egg, cheese, yoghurt, nuts, beans, lentils or vegetarian products at least twice a day
- If you are unable to manage a main meal, have a snack instead e.g. a sandwich or cheese on crackers

## What about the health implications of this diet?

The suggestions are only a short term measure to prepare you for surgery, help you gain weight, or to help you recover. You should only continue with these suggestions until your appetite returns, your wound(s) have healed or until you notice that your weight has increased to a weight that you are comfortable with.

## What if you have high cholesterol?

If you have a reduced appetite and are concerned about your cholesterol, you can increase the energy and protein content of your diet using foods such as oily fish, avocados, nuts or using products containing plant stanols or sterols such as Benecol® and Flora Pro.Activ.

## What about alcohol?

It's not compulsory to avoid alcohol, unless advised to do so by your doctor/surgeon/ pharmacist. Ensure you stick to the recommended limits of no more than 14 units of alcohol per week, spread evenly over three days or more, and aiming to have several alcohol-free days each week.

**However, it is not advisable to drink alcohol for at least 48 hours before your surgery.**

## The day of your surgery

You will be advised in advance by your medical team about the specific times when you should stop taking oral diet and fluids on the day of your surgery.

## After your surgery

You will be encouraged to eat and drink as you feel able (unless advised otherwise by the medical team).

If you are feeling sick let your Macmillan nurse/GP know so you can be prescribed regular anti-sickness medication to help.

If your appetite is reduced, follow the advice given in the "Achieving a nourishing diet" section (page 2) and try build up shakes like Aymes®, Meritene or Complian up to 3 times/day as they will fill the gap in your dietary intake. This ensures that your body is provided with all of the nutrients it requires to help you heal.

If you currently wish to lose weight, following surgery is **not** the time to do it. You can look at trying to lose weight once you are fully recovered.

**Having a reduced oral intake after surgery will inhibit your recovery, your wounds will take longer to heal, and you will be more likely to pick up infections.**

## Potential side effects of cancer treatments

### Chemotherapy

See Macmillan Cancer Support leaflet "Eating problems and cancer" for advice and tips on keeping up your oral intake whilst experiencing side effects of chemotherapy.

### Hormone Therapy

Avoid black cohosh & red clover to treat flushes/sweats.

Hormone therapy can negatively affect bone health. Therefore it's recommended you consume foods rich in calcium & vitamin D (speak to GP regarding a daily vitamin D supplement). See food fact sheets for further information on calcium & vitamin D.