

Going home

If you are struggling to regain your appetite when you are discharged home, Nestlé Meritene, Aymes or Complan shakes can be bought from your local pharmacy.

If after a few weeks at home:

- Your appetite has not improved,
- You are losing weight
- Your wound is not healing

.....ask your GP for a referral to see a Dietitian.

The Dietitian can see you on the ward if you have any specific questions or concerns about your diet, just let one of the nursing staff know. If you need to follow a special diet you will be referred to the Dietitian. You will also be referred if you have had significant weight loss.

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Nutritional Advice for the Enhanced Recovery After Surgery Programme

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.

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.

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

You do not need to make any changes to your diet, unless you have been advised to follow a special diet or have been advised to lose weight to prepare you for surgery.

After your operation – on return to the ward

- You will be encouraged to eat and drink as you feel able.
- If you are feeling sick let the nursing staff know so you can be prescribed regular anti-sickness medication to help.
- You will be encouraged to take 3 Aymes[®] shakes which you should continue to take until your appetite/normal intake has returned.
- Whilst you are not eating as well as normal, the Aymes[®] shakes 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.
- There is some limited evidence to suggest that chewing gum may improve the recovery of gastrointestinal function postoperatively.
- 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.

- You should continue to follow the nourishing diet advice you were following before your surgery.
- You will be encouraged to bring in snacks from home or to choose from a variety of snacks from the ward.
- If you are still struggling with your appetite a few days after your surgery, you may be referred to the Dietitian for an individual nutritional assessment.
- The Aymes[®] shakes are not suitable for anyone following a lactose free or renal diet. Please let one of the nursing staff know so that you can be advised on eating well for your specific diet.

The day before and the day of your operation

- You may eat a normal diet **until 6 hours** before your operation.
- After this time you will need to **stop eating** and drink only clear fluids **up until 2 hours** before you go to theatre. Clear fluids consist of **black** tea/coffee, squash and water.
- This may alter depending on the advice of your anaesthetist.
- You will be given a carbohydrate rich drink called Preload. This is part of the enhanced recovery programme and will help improve your recovery.
- If you are to be admitted **on the morning** of your surgery you will be given 3 sachets of Preload at your pre-operative appointment or 'school'.
- If you are to be admitted **the night before** you will be given the Preload sachets by the ward staff.

When to take your Preload drinks

- The **first** sachet of Preload is to be taken in the **evening before** your surgery
- The **second** sachet is to be taken **before bed or before 4am** on the morning of your surgery.
- The **third** sachet should be taken **at least 2 hours before** your surgery, when your clear fluids stop.

If you are eating less than normal or have lost weight unintentionally

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 pressure sores and tissue breakdown
- Muscle loss, which can affect:
 - ◇ Lung and heart function
 - ◇ General mobility
 - ◇ Poor concentration levels and depression

However, if you currently follow a special diet, for example lactose-free or a renal diet, then please let one of the nursing staff know.

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 recovery.

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 a nourishing drink such as a chilled or warm milky drink or soup.
- 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 or until you notice that your weight has increased to a weight that you are comfortable with.

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What if you have high cholesterol?

If you have a reduced appetite but 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?

There is no need to avoid alcohol, unless you have been 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 at least 48 hours before your surgery.