

Starting to eat normally

Eating Disorders Service



Specialist
Services

Introduction

'Normal eating' is when you have regular eating habits to keep you healthy and well. For most people this means eating three meals a day, along with snacks to satisfy hunger. It also means being comfortable eating with family and friends, enjoying eating and not having a lifestyle controlled by food.

How do I establish a normal healthy eating pattern?

Whatever eating problem you have, to start the recovery process it is very important that you establish a regular eating pattern.

This will be a difficult time for you as you begin to change your current way of eating. The following pages detail a starting meal plan that has been put together to introduce the five food groups and some of the vitamins and minerals that you need for good health. **This is only a starting plan; once you have started a dietitian can advise on how this can be adapted for your individual needs. You can be referred to a community dietitian via your GP or to the Eating Disorders dietitian via the Community Mental Health Teams.** You should also book an appointment with your GP to arrange regular checks on your physical health.

Portion Measures

In this diet sheet we have tried to identify portions in everyday measures. The portions given for foods in each food group have similar calories. These portions and menus have been designed specifically for people with an eating disorder who are trying to start eating normally.

Portion sizes on food labels and recommended elsewhere may be different; this is because they are designed to be part of a different meal plan.

1 cup = 250ml=8 fluid oz

1 tablespoons=15ml

1 dessertspoon=10ml

1 teaspoon=5ml

Measures given in spoons are heaped spoons of the food unless it specifically says “level” spoon.

Measures given in cups are a scoop of the food, the cup is lightly tapped and the cup topped up to level with the rim.

More portion sizes for other foods are available from your dietitian.

Vitamins and Minerals

This is a starting meal plan so it will not meet all your vitamin and mineral needs. While trying to start eating normally you should also take a standard multivitamin and mineral supplement based on your age. These are available from chemists. You can check with the chemist that you have chosen the most suitable option.

1 STARCHY FOODS

Main Nutrients: Carbohydrates (CHO), Fibre, Iron (Fe) and B Vitamins

One portion is:

Bread: 1 ½ slices of large wholemeal bread medium sliced, or 3 slices of small white sliced bread, or 3” stick of french bread, or 1 pitta, or ½ a naan

Potato: 3 egg sized boiled, or 4 tablespoons mashed, or 5 large oven chips

Rice: white rice - 2 tablespoons uncooked or 4 tablespoons cooked; brown rice - 2 level tablespoons uncooked or 3 tablespoons cooked

Pasta: pasta shapes - dry 3 tablespoons or cooked 5 tablespoons; spaghetti - 50 strands of 10" spaghetti or 1 cup cooked

Cous Cous: 2½ level tablespoons uncooked or 4 tablespoons cooked

Breakfast Cereals: 1 ½ cups bran flakes / cornflakes, or 2 Weetabix or 2 Shredded Wheat, or 3 tablespoons no added sugar muesli, or 6 tablespoons cooked or 3 tablespoons uncooked porridge

Crackers: 4 cream crackers, or 11 water biscuits, or 5 Ryvita, or 6 large rice cakes

Bread Muffins: 1 white/wholemeal

Fruit Bread: 1 standard hot cross bun, or 1½ slices of pre-sliced malt loaf

2 FRUIT & VEGETABLES

Fruit

*One portion of **fresh fruit** is:*

Medium-Sized Fruit: One medium fruit such as one apple, banana, pear, orange, nectarine or a Sharon fruit

Small-Sized Fruit: for example, 2 plums, 2 satsumas, 3 apricots, 2 kiwi fruit, 7 strawberries, 14 cherries, 6 lychees

Large-Sized Fruit: ½ a grapefruit, 1 slice of papaya, 1 slice of melon (2" slice), 1 large slice of pineapple, 2 slices of mango (2" slices)

Dried Fruit

- 1 tablespoon of raisins, currants, sultanas,
- 1 tablespoon of mixed fruit, 2 figs, 3 prunes,
- 1 handful of banana chips

Tinned Fruit

Roughly the same quantity of fruit that you would eat as a fresh portion; 2 pear or peach halves, or 6 apricot halves, or 8 segments of tinned grapefruit.

Juice

One small glass (100mls) of 100% fruit juice. Juice only counts as one portion a day, no matter how much you drink.

Vegetables

One portion of vegetables is:

Green Vegetables: 2 broccoli spears, or 8 cauliflower florets, or 4 heaped tablespoons of cabbage, spinach, spring greens or green beans

Cooked Vegetables: 3 heaped tablespoons of cooked (for example steamed, boiled, microwaved) vegetables such as courgettes, carrots, brussel sprouts or swede

Salad Vegetables: 3 sticks of celery, or 2" piece of cucumber, or 1 medium tomato, or 7 cherry tomatoes, or 1 side salad (the size of a cereal bowl)

Tinned & Frozen Vegetables: Roughly the same quantity as you would eat as a fresh portion. For example 3 heaped tablespoons of tinned or frozen carrots, peas or sweetcorn

3 PROTEIN

Main Nutrients: Protein, Iron (Fe), B Vitamins, Zinc, Magnesium

One portion is:

Eggs: 2 (medium)

Baked Beans: $\frac{1}{2}$ a standard tin (tin = 400g)

Tuna/Salmon: 1 tin (125g) tuna drained of brine, $\frac{2}{3}$ of tin (213g) salmon, skin and bones removed drained of brine

Sausages: 1 thick

Bacon: 2 rashers

Fish Fingers: 3

Ham: 24 slices wafer thin, 7 slices pre packed thin squares

Chicken/Turkey/Beef: $\frac{1}{2}$ cup raw minced, 1 cup cooked diced

Roast meat: Size and thickness of palm of hand

Soya / Quorn: 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups mince, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups chopped pieces, 2 burgers, 3 sausages

Tofu: $\frac{1}{2}$ packet = 125g

White fish: hand size or tail fillet

Beans (haricot /kidney/cannellini): $\frac{1}{3}$ of standard tin (tin = 400g)

Lentils: $\frac{1}{3}$ cup dried raw

Nuts (without shell): 15 almonds, or 6 brazil nuts, or 25 peanuts, or 3 whole walnuts, or 1 packet sesame seed snaps (3 individual)

Cheese: A cheese portion could be used as a protein portion once a day but it cannot be counted as a protein **and**

dairy when used as a protein portion. See Cheese portions in Milk & Dairy Foods (section 4).

4 MILK & DAIRY FOODS

Main Nutrients: Calcium, Protein, Vitamin B12, Vitamins A&D

One Portion is:

Full cream cow/goat milk: 150mls

Semi-skimmed cow/goat milk: 200mls

Skimmed cow/goat milk: 300mls

Soya milk calcium enriched (sweetened): 250mls

Soya milk calcium enriched (unsweetened): 600mls

Yoghurt: 1 low fat yogurt 125g pot, or 2 low fat low sugar fruit yogurts 120g pot, or 1 soya yogurt 125g pot

Custard: 3 tablespoons standard tinned or 140g low fat tinned

White sauce: 4 tablespoon

Ice cream: 1/3 cup

Yakult original: 3 bottles (bottle = 65mls)

Actimel – fat free: 4 bottles (bottle – 100g)

Cheese: 1 raisin box size cheddar whole (30g), or 1 cup grated cheddar

Cottage cheese: 2 tablespoons standard, or 2½ tablespoons reduced fat version

Cheese triangles: 2 standard triangles (17.5g each) or 4 light triangles (17.5g each)

Cream cheese: 2 ½ level dessertspoons standard, or 4 ½ level dessertspoons light version, or 6 level dessertspoons extra light version

Processed cheese Slices: 2 Slices

5 FOODS CONTAINING FAT

Main Nutrients: Essential Fatty Acids, some Vitamins

One portion is:

Butter: 3 level teaspoons standard or 4 level teaspoons reduced fat

Sunflower spread: 2 level dessertspoons, or 2 level tablespoons light version, or 4 level tablespoons extra light version

Oil: 1 tablespoon

Mayonnaise: 1 level tablespoon standard, or 2 level tablespoons light, or 9 level tablespoons extra light

Salad cream: 1 level tablespoon standard, or 2½ level tablespoons light, or 4½ level tablespoons extra light

Cream: 1 tablespoon double, or 1½ tablespoons whipping, or 3½ tablespoons single, or 1½ tablespoons crème fraiche standard, or 4 tablespoons crème fraiche half fat

Pesto: 1 tablespoon

Cook in sauce: 125g ($\frac{1}{4}$ of standard jar)

6 SNACK IDEAS

Crisps: 1 individual packet

Chocolate: 3 chunks, or a 2 finger Kit Kat, or $\frac{1}{2}$ Twirl or Wispa or Crunchie or Twix

Ice cream: $\frac{1}{3}$ cup

Scone: 1

Biscuits: 2 Jaffa cakes, or 1 chocolate digestive, or 3 Rich Tea

Cereal bar: 1 standard size for example Kellogg's Special K Bar, Harvest, Alpen

Sponge cake: 1 slice - $\frac{1}{8}$ th of a standard 8" cake tin

Chocolate mini roll: 1

Currant bun/crumpet/bread muffin: 1

Pringles: 20 standard

Sweets: 8 Starburst sweets or 6 Fox's Glacier Fruit sweets

Religious and cultural differences will be taken into account and an individual meal plan can be agreed at a consultation with the Eating Disorders Team Dietitian, which you can request. Alternatively, if preferred, you can request a consultation with the community dietitian at your surgery via your GP.

Example Meal Plan 1

<i>Meal</i>	<i>Foods</i>
Breakfast	
Starchy	2 Weetabix
Fat*	1 portion
Marmalade/honey	None
Mid-morning	
Fruit	Orange juice 100 ml
Lunch	
Starchy	French bread 3" slice
Protein	2 eggs
Fat	Light mayonnaise 2 level tablespoons
Salad/Vegetable	Mixed salad – 1 side plate
Mid-afternoon	
Fruit	Apple
Evening meal	
Starchy	Mashed potatoes 4 table spoons
Protein	Chicken breast – 1 cup cooked and diced
Fat	Cook in sauce 125g ($\frac{1}{4}$ of standard jar)
Salad/Vegetable	Peas 3 tablespoons
Fruit	Mandarins tinned in own juice, 2 tablespoons, with half fat crème fraiche, 4 tablespoons (fat portion from breakfast)
Bed time	
Snack	Cereal bar

3 dairy portions throughout the day: 600 ml skimmed milk in cups of tea or on cereal, 125g low fat fruit yogurt in the afternoon.

* If missed at breakfast because you were having cereal this needs to be an addition at another time in the day.

Example Meal Plan 2

<i>Meal</i>	<i>Foods</i>
Breakfast	
Starchy	Small sliced white loaf, 3 slices
Fat*	Reduced fat butter, 4 level teaspoons
Marmalade/honey	If liked
Mid-morning	
Fruit	Apple
Lunch	
Starchy	1 bread muffin
Protein	4 light cheese triangles
Fat	Pesto, 1 tablespoon
Salad/Vegetable	Mixed salad – 1 side plate
Mid-afternoon	
Fruit	Banana
Evening meal	
Starchy	White rice, 4 tablespoons cooked
Protein	25 cashew nuts
Fat	Olive oil, 1 tablespoon
Salad/Vegetable	Mixed cooked vegetables ,3 tablespoons
Fruit	5 dried apricots
Bed time	
Snack	Scone

3 dairy portions throughout the day: 400 ml skimmed milk, 2 low fat and sugar yogurts.

* If missed at breakfast because you were having cereal this needs to be an addition at another time in the day.

7 FLUID

You may be used to drinking large quantities of fluid throughout the day to fill you up and avoid feeling hungry. An adequate amount of fluid is 1.5 – 2 litres [8-10 cups] drunk throughout the day. It is best to have a wide variety of fluids including e.g. milk, fruit juice, tea, squash rather than just water. Fluid should be avoided just before you eat and only in small amounts during the meal.

8 ALCOHOL

This should be kept to a minimum as it can affect mood.

Sensible limits are:

- 14 units per week for women
- 21 units per week for men

1 unit = 1 glass wine or 1 pub measure of spirits or ½ pint lager / cider / beer

There should also be some alcohol-free days.

What to do if you are not gaining weight

This is a starting plan, it will be necessary to add in additional portions to achieve a higher weight and all your vitamin and mineral needs. You should discuss this with your dietitian. From a steady weight an additional 500kcal a day are required to gain 1 lb a week. Usually you would start with the plan and then add in an additional protein and two carbohydrate portions with an additional item from the snacks list to achieve an additional 500 kcal a day.

I don't feel hungry

It is going to take a long time before you are able to rely on feelings of hunger and fullness to guide you. You may not even experience or recognise feelings of hunger at a normal body weight for some time. There are going to be many mealtimes when you do not 'feel like eating'. The reasons for this are more likely to be related to feeling worried or anxiety about eating too much or going out of control. It is because these feelings get confused and you become focussed on how much or how little to eat at these meals that we strongly recommend you eat according to your eating plan, like following a prescription. Ensure you are choosing different foods everyday so you have lots of variety in your diet.

Contact details

Eating Disorders Service

The Bridge
Priory Health Park
Glastonbury Road
Wells BA5 1TJ

Tel: 01749 836568

This leaflet is available in other formats, including easy read summary versions and other languages upon request. If this would be helpful to you, please speak to a member of staff.

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