

# Tips to help your recovery from illness

## Food and Nutrition page 1 of 3

Following illness, changes in weight and appetite are common and can result in weight loss or weight gain.

This can be for many reasons;

- **Poor appetite**
- **Tiredness and weakness**
- **Reduced activity levels**
- **Eating high energy “comfort” foods** (i.e: chocolates and crisps)

It is important to remember that everyone experiences fluctuations in weight and that this is normal especially following illness, this can be worrying.

**Eating and drinking well is important** as it provides the body with **hydration, energy, and nutrients** that help with recovery.

Remember, keeping active, eating nutritious meals and having regular mealtimes can help your body recover quicker.

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## Food and Nutrition page 2 of 3

### Finding you are losing weight

**It is normal to have lost weight as a result of illness.** You may notice that your clothes feel looser on your skin or that you're not eating the same amount you used to. Eating nutritious meals will give your body the **energy and nutrients** (like protein, vitamins and minerals) that it needs to help recovery.

Try eating **little and often**: many people find that trying smaller meals and snacks inbetween, instead of three large meals, may feel more manageable.

- Always try to sit up whilst eating and drinking.
- You might also want to try choosing softer or easier to chew foods at this time.
- If you have a low appetite try snacks that have high calories and protein, [Click here for some examples](#)

**Nourishing drinks** can be helpful if you aren't feeling up to eating. These help supply the energy you need during recovery and provides good hydration which is essential on your recovery journey. Such drinks include; 1 pint blue top milk, which you can add flavouring to, and / or nutrition supplement drinks.



### Getting help with your recovery

**Ask for help:** ask your friends or family to prepare your meals for you so that you don't get too tired. You may be able to get food delivered to your home.

**There are a number of companies that deliver nutritionally balanced meals either fresh or frozen.** This can also help when you are tired and struggling to cope with food preparation.

**It is also important to drink enough.** Staying hydrated helps with recovery, and the feeling of physical strength. Avoiding alcohol during recovery is important as alcohol use (especially heavy intake) has a wide ranging effect on our bodies.

When your body is fighting infection it needs more energy and often needs more fluids.

**Eating and drinking more is crucial** to help recovery and support the body to fight disease and to help with recovery.



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## Food and Nutrition page 3 of 3



### Changes with taste or smell

You may find your favourite **foods taste and smell differently** following illness. This may mean that food may taste bland, salty, sweet or metallic. However, **these changes are usually short-term** but can affect your appetite and how much you eat.

You can try to improve the taste of food by choosing foods that appeal to you to ensure you eat well. You should also remember to continue to retry foods as your taste preferences are likely to change and return to normal as you recover further.

[More information here about loss of smell and taste after COVID-19](#)



### Worried about weight gain

Everyone experiences fluctuations in weight and gaining weight is a normal process, especially after long periods of illness.

**Reducing portion sizes and having a balanced diet** will aid with weight loss. If you find you are always hungry try and stick to a **regular meal pattern**, this can help regulate your levels of hunger. If you feel like you're hungry and you are looking for a snack, try having a drink first, often we think we're hungry when we're thirsty.

**Keep active: if possible, try and go for a walk every day.** This will help you lose weight and will help you get back to the things you enjoy. **Activity that includes movement benefits your health and wellbeing.**