



## DIETARY ADVICE FOR RECOVERING AFTER COVID-19

It has been shown that people recovering from Covid-19 may lose their appetite and experience unexpected weight loss. They also may experience symptoms such as fatigue, shortness of breath, taste changes and diarrhoea. These symptoms can affect your ability to shop, prepare meals and enjoy your food.

One way to help your recovery is to eat foods that are high in energy and protein. Fortifying food can help achieve this, using every day foods to increase the nutrient content of what you are eating. This means every mouthful will be full of nourishment.

### Helpful hints include:

- Avoid 'diet', 'low fat' or 'low calorie' foods and drinks
- Enrich foods, for example
  - Add extra butter/margarine to foods such as vegetables and potatoes
  - Be generous when spreading butter/margarine, jam and other toppings
  - Add cream and/or sugar/honey to drinks, breakfast cereals, sauces and puddings.
  - Fortify full fat milk; whisk 2-4 tablespoons of skimmed milk powder into a pint of milk
  - Add grated cheese, cream cheese, cream to foods e.g. soups, sauces, curries
  - Use mayonnaise, salad cream or dressing in sandwiches and salads
  - Add honey/syrup/jams to porridge, milky puddings, toast, teacakes
- Include some protein foods such as: meat, fish, beans, lentils, cheese, milk and yoghurts, tofu, quorn and nuts
- Take your time and relax, there is no need to rush your meal
- When your appetite is poor it helps to eat 'little and often', so try nourishing snacks between meals and at supper time
- Increase your intake of nourishing fluids (e.g. milk, milky drinks, & smoothies). Have drinks towards the end/or after a meal to avoid feeling full

### If you feel breathless, weak or fatigued it may be more difficult to shop or prepare meals:

- Try foods that are easier to chew such as porridge, mousse, milk puddings, soup and creamy yogurts. Nourishing drinks can also be helpful as mentioned above.
- Cold food can be as nourishing as a hot meal. Try quiche, sandwiches or biscuits.
- Use convenience foods such as ready meals, frozen foods, canned foods and take offers of help from friends, family and neighbours.
- Try to arrange home delivery of your shopping or if family/friends/neighbours could do your shopping and drop at your door.

## Taste changes

For some people their favourite foods do not taste the same after and it may take some time to recover.

- Use stronger seasoning to add flavour to savoury foods, for example mustard, herbs, pepper
- Add flavourings to pudding, for example nutmeg into rice pudding or custard, ginger and cinnamon to fruit pots and yoghurts
- Sharp tasting foods and fluids such as cranberry, lemon or lime may help to stimulate your taste buds and can potentially get rid of any unpleasant tastes

## Staying hydrated

- Getting enough fluid is essential for good health, and you will need more fluid than usual if you have an infection. Adults are usually advised to have 6-8 mugs or large glasses a day, but this may need to be higher for someone with a high temperature, warm weather and during physical activity. Remember, this can include nourishing fluids such as milk if their appetite isn't good.

## Vitamins and Minerals

Eating a varied diet is important for supporting the normal functioning of the immune system, and many nutrients influence the body's ability to fight and recover from infection. However, there is no individual nutrient, food or supplement that will boost immunity, help us recover from, or stop us getting highly infectious viruses, like Covid-19.

There is however a lot of discussion regarding the role of vitamin D supplementation and Covid-19. The main source of vitamin D is exposure to sunshine. Dietary sources of vitamin D include:

- Oily fish such as salmon, sardines, pilchards, trout, herrings and kippers contain reasonable amounts of vitamin D
- Egg yolk, meat, offal and milk contain small amounts but this varies during the seasons
- Margarine, some breakfast cereals and some yogurts have added vitamin D.

It is difficult to get an adequate amount of Vitamin D from a balanced diet. **We would therefore recommend a 10 micrograms supplement of vitamin D per day.** This is especially important for people who are unable to spend time outdoors in the sunshine.

## Further information

If you are concerned that you are continuing to have difficulty eating and drinking or have ongoing weight loss, contact your local GP or Dietitian.

## Food Provision

If you have concerns regarding food provision you may find the following contacts useful: Covid Community Helpline (food bank referrals or food requests) 0800 952 0330, Helping Hands (Fife Voluntary Action – a service that can assist with shopping) 0800 389 6046.



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