

Patient Information

Department of Nutrition and Dietetics

Liquid diet



Your dietitian is:

Telephone number: 024 7696 6161

For your body to be able to move well and stay a healthy weight, a healthy balanced diet is essential. This is even more important if you have been ill.

This leaflet will give you ideas on how to make your liquid diet as healthy and balanced as possible, while also being interesting and tasty. This will help you to make sure that you are getting enough of the vitamins and



minerals you need as well as enough calories and protein.

What textures can I have?

You may have been told to have only liquids by a member of the team of medical professionals who has been caring for you. Or you may find that you can't manage solid foods. This may be just for short time, but it may be how you need to take your food from now on.

There could be different reasons for this, such as problems with swallowing or with chewing.

I have been told that I should only have Level 3 (IDDSI) liquids only, what does that mean?

You may have been advised to have level 3 liquids only. This means IDDSI International Dysphagia Diet Standardisation Initiative (IDDSI) level 3.

This is advised to help make sure that you are as safe as possible when you drink. When you have swallowing problems, thin fluids can get into your lungs by mistake when you swallow.

Level 3 liquids:

- Can be drunk from a cup or eaten with a spoon
- Cannot be eaten with a fork because it would drip slowly in dollops through the prongs.
- Cannot be piped, layered or moulded on a plate because it will not stay in shape
- Do not need to be chewed, they can be swallowed straight away
- Have a smooth texture with no 'bits'
- Do not melt or change when they are a different temperature
- Spreads out if spilled onto a flat surface
- Easily pours from spoon when tilted - it does not stick to the spoon

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- Can be sucked through a standard or wide straw

If you aren't sure if you have been given a swallowing recommendation you should check with your GP. You could also check any letters you have had lately, especially if you have been in hospital.

Preparing your foods

Most food can be turned into liquid with a liquidiser, food processor, hand-held blender or soup maker. A sieve can help to remove pips, lumps and skin.

You might need to add extra liquid to make your recipe thin enough. Instead of adding water, try to use milk, cream, gravy, cheese sauce, white sauce, or tomato sauce. This will taste better and add extra vitamins, minerals, calories and protein.

Tips for food preparation

- Take off skin, bones, fat or gristle from meat, chicken and fish before blending
- Use milk and butter when blending potato
- Cook vegetables in water until they are very soft, then drain and blend them
- Take off skins and remove pips/seeds before blending fresh fruit. Tinned and cooked fruit blend well.

Try and have a mix of sweet and savoury flavours to make sure you have as wide a range of foods as possible. This will help make your food more interesting and help you to get the most vitamins, minerals and calories and protein.

Making sure that you are getting enough

You might notice that you are losing weight or getting low in energy. It is harder to eat well when you have a liquid diet.

Try these tips to help make sure you have enough calories and protein:

- Use fortified milk (see the recipe below) in drinks and sauces
- Add butter, cream and milk to make foods/drinks smooth
- Use sauces – cheese, tomato, curry, coconut milk/cream to make food smooth

Fortified milk

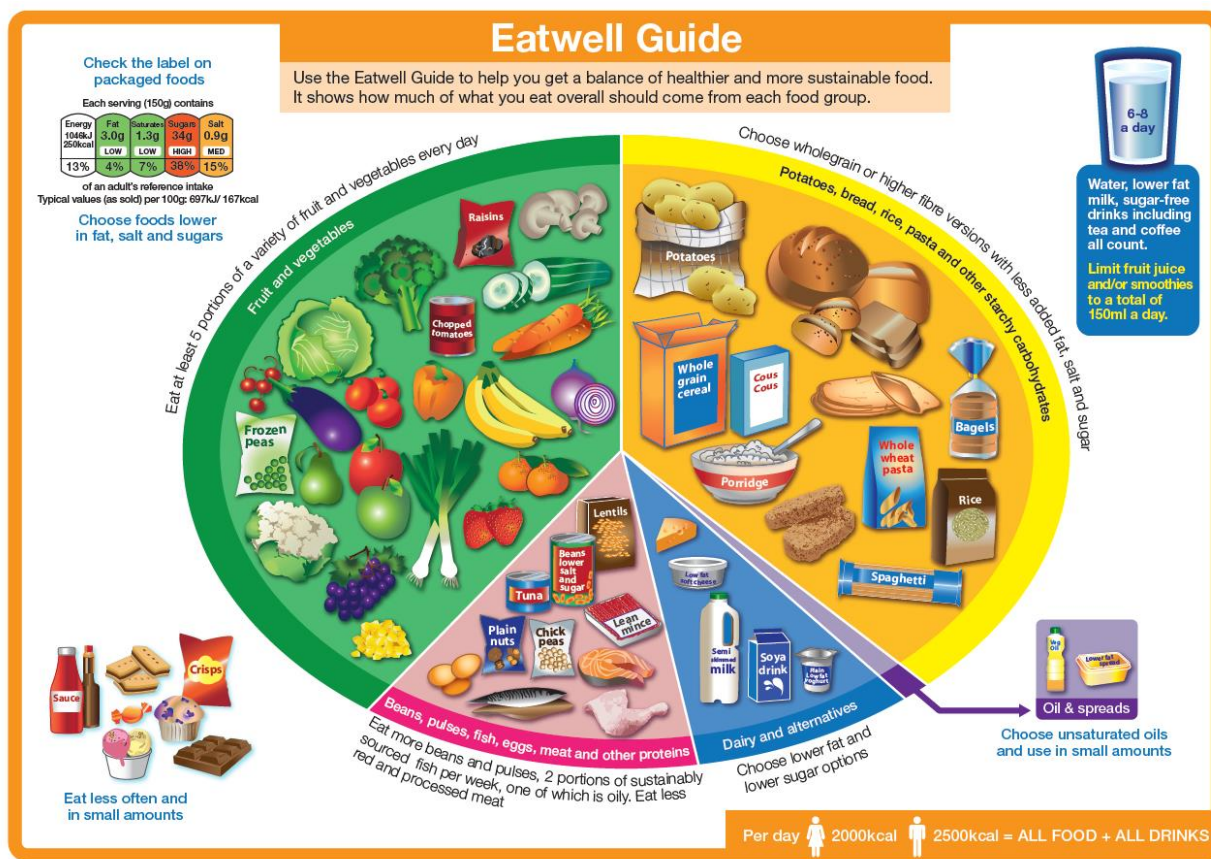
1 pint (568ml) whole milk + 4 heaped tbsp. dried skimmed milk powder (48g) = **Fortified** milk (543kcal; 37g protein)



Fortified milk can be used in:

- all cups of tea/coffee
- all milky drinks (hot chocolate, Ovaltine, Horlicks)
- to drink (cold or warm)
- breakfast cereal
- to make up powdered soup (instead of water)

Getting a healthy mix of foods



Bread, rice, pasta and other starchy foods - for energy and fibre

	Include	Avoid
Bread and pastry	Bread and pastry are NOT suitable, including chapati, bagels, pitta, pies	
Pasta	Overcooked pasta that is very soft. Add sauces e.g. tomato or cream, plus extra milk, cheese or cream, then blend well until the whole dish is smooth and of a liquidised consistency	Chunky, tough, undercooked pasta that is dry
Rice	Liquidised risotto with plenty of sauce to ensure the right consistency.	Brown, whole, red or rice with husks will not blend well
Cereals	Strained porridge or oat flakes e.g Ready Brek or instant oats with extra milk	All other cereals including muesli and Weetabix.
Potato	Potato can be liquidised with milk and butter Ensure the	Crispy or hard parts that may not be liquidised

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	texture is smooth and get rid of any lumps Instant potato can also be used	completely smooth
Yam, Plantain	Cooked and mashed with milk, oil or butter	Fried or crunchy pieces of vegetable

Dairy foods and alternatives - For energy, protein and calcium

	Include	Avoid
Cheese	Cheese sauces, Soft cheeses, blended such as cottage cheese and ricotta with additional milk or cream	Cheeses with nuts or fruit
Yoghurt/Non-dairy alternatives	Smooth/set yoghurt with no fruit pieces adding milk or cream as required to make a liquidised texture Yoghurt drink e.g. Lassi	Yoghurt with fruit
Puddings	Cream, custard Angel delight with extra milk	Avoid ice cream, sorbet and jelly if you have been recommended thickened fluids, unless it is blended into a drink and has no bits

Beans, pulses, fish egg, meat and other proteins - for muscles, bones and skin

	Include	Avoid
Meat	Remove any skin, bones, fat or gristle from meat, chicken or fish before liquidising All types of meat and poultry can be liquidised. Add gravy or sauce when liquidising	Gristly, stringy, chewy, tough meat that may cause lumps. Bacon
Fish	Frozen or tinned fish can be liquidised and thinned. Cook until soft and then flake or mash the fish and blend into a liquidised consistency. Blend	Fish with bones. Fresh fish is not advised due to the risk of bones.

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	with cheese sauce, parsley sauce, tomato sauce, condensed soup, mayonnaise, lemon juice etc.	
Eggs	Eggs are not suitable	
Beans, pulses, lentils and nuts	Skinless beans, pulses and lentils only, liquidised. Tinned varieties may be softer easier to blend. Blend with a sauce Use smooth nut butters in smoothies/shakes	Nuts Beans, pulses and lentils with skins/husks
Tofu	Silken tofu blends well and can be used in sweet or savoury dishes	Fried chunks or scrambled

Fruits and vegetables - for vitamins, minerals and fibre

	Include	Avoid
Vegetables	Vegetables cooked until very tender, drained and then liquidised.	Fibrous, stringy vegetables e.g celery. Vegetable skins.
Fruit	Tinned and stewed fruit liquidise well by adding fruit juice or syrup from the tin. Fruit Juices	Fruit peel and seeds. Remove before liquidising. Stringy textured fruits eg. Pineapple

How much do I need?

The UK guideline for adults for calories is 2500 for men and 2000 for women for a day. Most people need more than 0.75g of protein per kg of their body weight, so if you weighed 57kg (around 9 stone) you would need to have around 43g of protein a day.

	Calories	Protein
Cooked chicken breast 85g	166	25g
Cooked white fish fillet 200g	200	21g
Yoghurt 125g pot	80	5-7g
Cheddar cheese 30g	124	9g
Tofu 80g	48	7g

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You might need more or less than this, depending on how much you weigh, your health and age. Food package labels can be a useful guide.

Recipe Ideas

Leek, onion and potato soup:

- 2 sliced leeks, 1 potato peeled and quartered, 1 small diced onion, 400ml stock and 200ml milk
- Sauté the leeks and onion in butter/oil gently for a couple of minutes
- Add the potato and 400ml stock and simmer for 20 minutes until vegetables are soft
- Puree or liquidise and add milk to obtain a liquid consistency and season to taste
- Reheat gently to serve and add a swirl of cream

Blackcurrant cream

- 150ml milk, 1 tablespoon blackcurrant squash, 2 tablespoons double cream
- Mix together well in a glass

Roasted butternut squash soup:

- One butternut squash, quartered and seeds removed, 400ml stock and milk, a sprig of rosemary
- Place the squash skin side down in a roasting tin with oil, add the rosemary and cook in hot oven for 30-40 minutes
- Remove the rosemary and scoop the soft squash into a liquidiser
- Puree or liquidise and add milk to obtain a liquid consistency
- Reheat gently to serve and add a swirl of cream

Milkshake

- 1 scoop ice-cream, 200ml of milk, flavouring e.g. vanilla essence, squash, Crusha, Nesquick, coffee essence
- Liquidise ingredients together and serve

Iced Coffee

- 100mls strong instant coffee, chilled
- 100mls full fat milk
- 2 tablespoons single cream
- sugar or syrup
- 2 tablespoons chocolate/coffee ice cream
- 2 teaspoons grated chocolate
- 2 tablespoons skimmed milk powder

Making changes for intolerances or preferences

If you don't take animal products you could use powdered pea protein. Very finely ground almonds or smooth nut butters can be helpful to add to recipes.

Alternate milks can be used as a base for sauces and drinks. These might include almond milk, soya milk or coconut milk.

Oral care for people on a liquid diet

It is important to keep your mouth healthy. This makes it less likely that you will get other infections. People who can't swallow well are more likely to get pneumonia if they have poor oral hygiene.

You may have been told you need to take more calories. This might mean eating higher calorie or sweet foods, which can make it harder to have a healthy mouth and teeth.

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- Visit the dentist regularly, tell them about your diet and ask about protective treatments for teeth
- Brush teeth, gums and tongue twice a day with fluoride toothpaste, especially last thing at night
- Don't forget medicines can be sugary as well. Try to take them at mealtimes if possible.
- Thoroughly clean dentures and plates with a brush and soak them in cleaning solution

Nutritional supplement drinks

If you are losing weight or have a low body weight, your GP or dietitian may suggest you try a prescribable nutritional supplement drink. You can also buy these in supermarkets and chemists. Some brands are Complian®, Meritene®, Nutrament® and Nurishment. They are useful to help you get enough calories and protein. They should not replace meals or snacks unless your appetite is very poor.

Additional information

Please do not hesitate to contact us for further advice and information.

This leaflet was produced by the University Hospital Coventry Dietitians.

You can contact them by calling 024 7696 6161.

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format please contact 024 7696 6161 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

Patient Information

To give feedback on this leaflet please email feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk

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