



Eating with a poor appetite & Type 2 Diabetes

Short-term illness

If you are unwell you may find that your appetite is affected and you don't want to eat your usual diet, as a result you may lose weight unintentionally

Certain illnesses and certain medications, such as steroids might make your blood glucose levels rise above the normal range (hyperglycaemia) .

When you are unwell it is important to still try and eat regularly. If you can't follow your typical diet it's okay to be more relaxed for a short period of time until you feel better. Often plain cold foods are best when you're feeling sick.

If you can't keep food down, try snacks or drinks with carbohydrates in to give you energy. Try to sip sugary drinks (such as fruit juice or non-diet cola or lemonade) or suck on glucose tablets or sweets like jelly beans. Letting fizzy drinks go flat may help keep them down. If you're vomiting, or not able to keep fluids down, get medical help as soon as possible.

It is also important to take your medication as normal unless advised otherwise

People with high blood glucose levels are more at risk of dehydration so remember to drink plenty of fluid (aim for 8 cups/day) that do not contain sugar (as this will exacerbate the problem)

If you become unwell

Contact your diabetes care team immediately if you have a high blood sugar level and experience the following symptoms:

- Feeling or being sick
- Tummy (abdominal) pain and diarrhoea
- Rapid, deep breathing
- A fever (38C or above) for more than 24 hours
- Signs of dehydration, such as a headache, dry skin and a weak, rapid heartbeat
- Difficulty staying awake

These symptoms could be a sign of a more serious complication of hyperglycaemia, such as diabetic ketoacidosis, and you may need to be looked after in hospital

Blood glucose targets

Later in life or in long-term illness, the target for diabetes control* can often be relaxed and a new target should be agreed with your diabetes care team. * The usual target range would be a HbA1c below 53mmol/mol or if you are testing using a glucose monitor then 4-7mmol/L before meals.

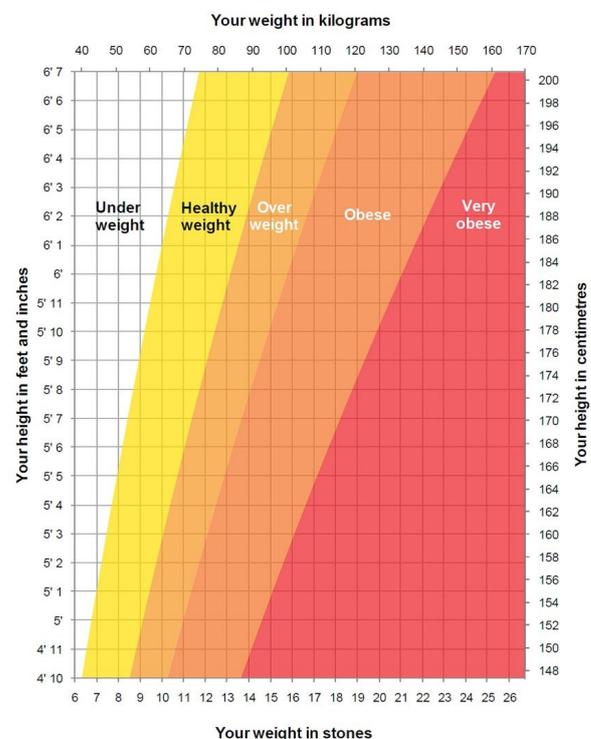
Long-term weight-loss

Unintentional weight-loss can happen due to various reasons; it can sometimes occur later in life when appetite and food preferences change or when you are struggling with physical or mental health conditions.

It is important to try to maintain a healthy body-mass-index (between 18.5-24.9kg/m²) as being overweight or underweight carry their own health risks.

Although weight-loss may have once been considered beneficial for improving your blood glucose control, rapid unintentional weight-loss can cause malnutrition.

Malnutrition can make you more prone to illness and infection, cause slower healing of wounds, reduced muscle mass and energy levels as well as low mood amongst many others. In this instance it is recommended that you increase your calorie and protein intake to prevent further weight loss and promote weight gain.



Check if you are a healthy weight by using the below BMI chart to match your current height to your weight

Foods to help promote weight gain

It can be confusing trying to gain weight with diabetes because you may have got used to limiting high calorie foods, especially sugary foods such as cakes and biscuits. However if you have lost a significant amount of weight unintentionally then the main priority for your health is to stop further weight loss, therefore making dietary changes is essential!

Top tips:

- **If you are struggling to eat main meals then try switching to smaller meals and more frequent snacking**
- **Try to increase your intake of fat and protein (fat and protein don't impact blood glucose levels). Use full fat dairy products such as; whole milk (blue top), full fat cheese and yogurts as these are high in calories and protein.**
- **If you're not managing your meals well or don't enjoy savoury foods, it is fine to have extra puddings, cakes and biscuits. Remember that whether you eat a piece of cake or a slice of toast, they both break down into glucose in the same way (see carbohydrates information sheet). And you need some glucose in your diet for energy!**

Increasing calorie intake

Add the following items to your shopping list: Butter, double cream, cheese, whole milk, skimmed-milk powder

- Fortify 1 pint of full fat milk with 3 tablespoons of skimmed milk powder– use this for cereal, hot-drinks and sauces
- Add grated cheese to mashed/ jacket potato, vegetables, soups, beans, omelettes, scrambled eggs or sandwiches
- Use double cream in porridge, soups, mashed potato, milky puddings, or on top of cake and fruit
- Spread a thick layer of butter/ margarine on bread, crackers and add to potatoes, vegetables
- Add extra oil when cooking foods
- Aim to have milky drinks between meals. This could be a glass of milk, a homemade milkshake milky coffee, low sugar hot chocolate, Horlicks or Ovaltine made with all milk. Aim for 2-3 drink per day.

Snack / light meal ideas

- Cheese and crackers
- Plain nuts & seeds
- Plain scone with butter, a thin spread of jam and cream
- 2-3 biscuits
- Avocado / peanut butter / tinned fish / baked beans / cheese / eggs on toast

**Use granary/ wholemeal bread for toast if possible*

Pudding ideas

- Full-fat yoghurt
- Fresh / tinned fruit and double cream
- Rice pudding *
- Cake/ fruit crumble with custard *

** Try adding 2 x tbsp. of double cream or 2 x tbsp. of skimmed-milk powder*

Nourishing drink recipes

Homemade milkshake; 300kcal, 17g of protein

- 200 ml (1/3 pint) whole milk
- 2 tablespoons of no-added sugar milkshake mix
- 30 g (3 tablespoons) dried milk powder

Put milkshake and milk powder into a glass then add milk gradually, stirring well



Fruity yoghurt drink

400kcal, 15g of protein

- 300 ml (1/2 pint) whole milk
- 100g of full-fat Greek or natural yoghurt
- 30 g (3 tablespoons) dried milk powder
- fresh/ frozen berries or 1 small banana

Blend ingredients using a liquidiser or hand blender

Summary If your appetite is poor then it is important to make the most of every mouthful by making your food as nutritious as possible. Aim to eat high energy, high protein food discussed above, but if you can't then have the foods you enjoy even if they are higher in carbohydrate and sugar.

If you continue to lose weight or your blood glucose levels increase as result of dietary changes please consult your GP and diabetes team.