

Making Mealtimes Manageable

Our eating habits change as we go through life; we may start to like different foods, have unusual combinations or lose interest in eating. Small fluctuations in weight are perfectly normal but to avoid noticeable weight change, look at the following suggestions to help improve your intake.

- Keep snacks nearby** and store foods that are easy to prepare so you can make the most of times when you feel hungry.
- Try eating little and often** as smaller portions and snacks are easier to manage.
- Adapted cutlery and crockery may be easier to use** or prepare meals that you can eat with your hands (see 'Finger Foods' resource).
- Make meals look colourful** so they are more appealing and appetising.
- Give yourself time to eat** in a calm, peaceful and well lit environment. Eating with others can also make mealtimes more pleasurable.
- Remove any distractions** and keep your table clutter free so that you can concentrate on your food.
- Turn off the television** at mealtimes as it can be off-putting. Background music may be more relaxing.
- Season food generously to add flavour.** Use pepper, lemon juice, herbs or spices rather than salt.
- Try adding sugar to savoury foods** like baked beans, scrambled egg or gravy to increase taste.
- Cook sweeter vegetables** such as carrots, parsnips or swede and serve chutneys and pickles with main dishes to add sweetness.
- Keep meals warm on an insulated plate** or put aside food in the oven or microwave and serve later.



Tip: Contact your local occupational therapy department or Disability Resource Centre for more information about available equipment to help you eat and drink more independently. See www.drcbeds.org.uk for advice services in Bedfordshire.