



Nutrition for Patients with COVID-19 in Hospital and at Home

Nutrition and hydration play an important role in your body's response to and recovery from COVID-19 and are an essential part of your medical treatment.



Managing Severe Fatigue and Breathlessness

- You may require some assistance with cutting foods, preparing meals or even help eating.
- Try smaller portions of energy and protein dense foods frequently throughout the day such as full fat products and foods or drinks with added cream, milk powder, butter, cheese, ground nuts or honey.
- Choose softer, moist foods or liquid foods as they are easier to chew and swallow.
- Take your time during meals.



Don't be
afraid to try
something
new



Managing a Loss of Taste and Smell



- Try sharp or spicy foods as they have stronger flavours.
- Cold or room temperature food may taste better than hot.
- If foods taste metallic, try using plastic cutlery.
- Consider adding sugar to foods that seem too salty or bitter.
- Add spices, herbs or pepper to flavour plain foods.
- Continue to try various foods as your tastes may change often throughout recovery.



Managing a Loss of Appetite



Snack ideas

Cheese with crackers, hummus with breadsticks, ice-cream with tinned fruit, yogurt, mixed nuts, Bombay or trail mix, rice pudding pot, scone with jam, flapjack, peanut butter with rice cakes, crisps, cereal bars.



Your dietitian or GP can advise whether you still require these at home.

- Eat more of the foods you enjoy - these can make you feel better.
- Eat nutrition dense foods where possible; choose full fat products, add cream, cheese, butter, oil, milk powder, ground nuts or honey to foods like curries, soups, scrambled eggs or on toast or scones.
- Try small, more frequent meals and snacks.
- Include nourishing drinks such as milk, milkshakes, hot chocolate and smoothies.
- Avoid filling up with non-nourishing drinks before eating such as squash, fizzy drinks.
- Oral Nutritional Supplements may have been prescribed by a dietitian or doctor if your intake of foods/ drinks does not meet nutritional goals. Take these in addition to your usual diet.



Minimising the Loss of Muscle and Strength

- Protein and energy are important to protect against muscle loss while fighting COVID-19, especially when bedridden or inactive.
- Try to eat protein rich foods at each meal and include as snacks throughout your day. These include; meat, fish, eggs, dairy products (milk, yogurt, cheese), beans, lentils, nuts and tofu.
- Calcium and vitamin D combined are essential for strong bones. Sources of calcium include dairy products, green leafy vegetables, soy beans and tofu.
- While in isolation, bedridden or less active, it may have been difficult get enough vitamin D from the sunshine.

Fortify milk with extra protein by adding skimmed milk powder (2-4tbsp to 1 pint) or buy Protein Milk.



Consider taking a 10microgram vitamin D supplement.

Managing Swallowing Difficulties



Follow guidelines set by your Speech and Language Therapist.

- Changing the consistency of fluids can make them safer to swallow.
- A modified textured diet may also be needed to ensure you are swallowing your food safely.
- Ensure you are sitting in an upright position, with all you need within reachable distance
- Special cups with handles or adapted cutlery may also assist when eating.



Managing Diarrhoea

- Avoid foods and drinks which may upset your gut – fatty/ spicy foods and alcohol can make diarrhoea worse.
- If you have had vomiting or diarrhoea, an oral rehydration solution may help you rehydrate such as Dioralyte or homemade solution.
- Avoid foods and drinks that cause wind such as fizzy drinks, chewing gum and some vegetables (onions, cabbage, beans and peas).
- Avoid high fibre foods until symptoms settle – choose white bread and baked products and remove peel/ skin from fruit and vegetables.

Homemade solution
3 1/2 cups water,
1 cup juice
{cranberry, orange,
apple or grape},
1/2 - 3/4 tsp salt



Regularly
rinse and
gargle
water



Managing a Dry Mouth

- Hydrate with a toothbrush or sponge dipped in cool water.
- Make sure your lips are kept moist, a lip balm may help.
- Add sauces such as gravy or mayonnaise to foods.
- Choose moist dishes like stew.
- Sucking hard-boiled sweets or chewing gum may aid saliva production.
- Clean teeth/ dentures regularly.



Managing Dehydration

- When ill with a fever our bodies lose water rapidly. We also lose extra water from our bodies if we have vomiting, diarrhoea or reduced fluid intake due to poor appetite.
- It is important to monitor regularly for signs of dehydration.
- Drink small amounts often, if you cannot manage large volumes at one time. Aim for a total of 6-8 cups a day (~1.5 litres or ~2.5 pints).
- Keep a drink at your bedside to sip during the night.
- Make sure you are in an upright position to drink safely.
- Use a straw or a beaker with handles if you find it too tiring to use a cup.
- Try to eat foods containing water such as fruit and vegetables, stew, soup, milk based puddings, jelly, ice cream or yogurt.

Signs of Dehydration
feeling thirsty,
lightheaded, dry mouth
and lips, producing small
amounts of urine, dark
coloured urine and
constipation

If you find yourself
coughing during meals or
your voice sounds wet,
seek advice from a
Speech and Language
Therapist.

'Making the Most of Every Bite' Cookbook has been designed for patients who have been told by a healthcare professional that they should be eating a diet that is high in protein and calories.

Many tips and recipe ideas can be found inside.

Available to download:
<https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/2/primarycare/community-funded-schemes/nutrition-supports/making-the-most-of-every-bite-cookbook.pdf>