

Oral Nutritional Supplements: Transition from Hospital to Home

This leaflet gives advice on how to use Oral Nutritional Supplements or 'supplement drinks' properly when you leave hospital. Please ask your Dietitian or Doctor if you need any further information.

Why was I given supplement drinks while in hospital?

- You may have lost weight without meaning to, or be classed as underweight, so could be at risk of malnutrition. Supplement drinks are given to help you get enough calories, protein, vitamins and minerals when you are too unwell to eat properly.
- Now you are going home, you might not need them anymore because a Food-Based approach can be used instead. Your supplement prescription will not automatically continue.

What advice should I follow at home?

If your appetite has returned to normal and your weight is stable:

- Return to your usual eating pattern.
- Finish any supplement drinks you took home with you from hospital, but don't ask for more.
- You can include 1 to 2 homemade milky drinks per day instead while you get back to your usual routine e.g. milkshake or malted drink.

If your appetite is still poor or you have lost weight without meaning to:

- Finish any supplement drinks you took home with you from hospital, but don't ask for more (unless your Doctor or Dietitian tells you to).
- Swap your usual milk for full-fat milk. Add extra calories and protein by adding 4 tablespoons of skimmed milk powder into 1 pint of milk to make fortified milk. Try and use the whole pint of milk each day.
- Include 1 to 2 milky drinks per day e.g. milkshake or malted drink.
- Aim to eat little and often, for example 3 meals and 2 to 3 snacks per day.
- Include nourishing snacks in between meals such as crackers with hummus, sliced apple with peanut butter, samosas, falafels or dried fruit and nuts.
- Add extra ingredients to your food to boost the calorie, protein, vitamin and mineral content. For example add grated cheese, nut butters, Greek yogurt, skimmed milk powder or seeds to meals and snacks.
- Speak to your Dietitian or Doctor if you are continuing to lose weight after following this Food-Based advice for 1 month.

For more information and ideas to boost your food intake please scan the QR code or follow the link to see [Food-Based Resources](#).



When do supplements need to be continued at home?

You may be advised to continue taking supplement drinks at home if your Dietitian or Doctor is very worried about your nutrition.

You may be given a different supplement drink to the one you had in hospital.

For people at home, powdered supplements that are mixed with milk are usually preferred. This is because they often taste better, contain more energy, protein, vitamins and minerals per serving, and are considered to be more environmentally friendly.

Tips for taking supplement drinks:

- They should not replace normal meals and snacks. Take them between meals and continue to follow the above advice to get the most out of your meals, snacks and drinks.
- If you struggle to drink your supplements in one go, try having in smaller, more frequent doses across the day (maybe at the same times as you take any medication).
- Powdered supplements should always be made with full-fat milk (unless advised otherwise) to boost the calorie and protein content.
- Most supplements taste best chilled, however always follow the product instructions or your Dietitian's advice.
- Packaging should be recycled where possible. In most areas plastic bottles and cardboard box packaging are fully recyclable. You may also be able to recycle Tetra Pak® cartons; check guidance from your local council if unsure.

When should I stop taking supplement drinks?

- You should only use them for a short period of time until your appetite has improved and you have stopped losing weight.
- If you are classed as 'underweight' but have maintained your weight for some time, or this is a 'normal' weight for you, your supplements may still be discontinued.
- You can continue to follow the above advice on boosting your calorie and protein intake once your supplement drinks are discontinued.
- If you continue to lose weight while you are taking supplement drinks, please speak to your Dietitian or Doctor for advice.