

Nutrition and Hydration

Information for patients with,
and recovering from,
COVID-19



Good nutrition and hydration helps to support your body in fighting COVID-19 virus.

Good nutrition will help to rebuild your muscle strength and function as part of your rehabilitation. Even though you may not feel hungry or thirsty, it is important that you eat and drink well.

Below is some general information to help you to maximise your fluid and food intake. If you have specific dietary requirements, please check with a healthcare professional that the information is safe for you to follow.

What you need to do

Stay hydrated

Having enough fluid in your body helps it to function well. Good hydration will help with your mobility and recovery.



- Aim to have eight cups of fluid each day.
- Take small, frequent sips of liquids every few minutes if you are not able to drink large amounts at one time.
- All fluids (except alcohol) count, but try to include nourishing fluids such as milky drinks or juices.



- Aim to drink enough fluid to keep your urine a pale straw colour.
- If you have a raised temperature, you may need to drink more fluids.

Take in enough energy and protein to be well nourished

You may require more nutrition than usual to support your body during, and after, illness. Restricting your energy intake with the aim of reducing body weight is not appropriate during acute illness or recovery. This is due to the risk of reducing muscle mass, strength and function.

- Include a protein-containing food and/or drink at every meal e.g. milk, milk-based food (or alternatives if unable to have dairy) meat, fish, pulses, beans, eggs.



- If your appetite is poor and/or eating is difficult due to breathlessness:
 - have three small meals and three high protein/higher energy snacks per day e.g. custard, rice-pudding, cheese and biscuits.
 - You may wish to consider buying nutritional supplement drinks such as Complan, Build Up or Nurishment. You can buy these from supermarkets and chemists. These provide extra energy and protein, and essential vitamins and minerals. To make the most of your appetite for food at mealtimes, try sipping them after a meal.



Practical tips to help you to eat and drink well

Reduced taste or smell	Choose strongly flavoured foods, e.g. spicy, citrus. Use sauces or extra salt/pepper to add more taste to meals.
Breathlessness	Choose soft (easy chew) foods and nourishing drinks. Eat slowly and take smaller bites. Try to eat more at the times when you feel less breathless.
Dry mouth	Sip drinks regularly, choose moist foods and ensure good mouthcare. Try chewing gum, or sucking on fruit sweets and mints to stimulate saliva production.

Where can I find more information

For help with access to food whilst self-isolating (if you don't have friends or family who can assist), volunteers are available to support with shopping. Please ring **Leeds City Council Helpline** on: **0113 378 1877** to arrange.

Food First booklet - Advice for Adults with a Poor Appetite.

This is produced by Leeds Community Healthcare and Leeds Teaching Hospitals. Please ask for a copy from your community nursing team or GP.

Managing Adult Malnutrition:

www.malnutritionpathway.co.uk/covid19

Use the 'resources finder' to help you find the right information on good nutrition during or after COVID-19 illness.

Lancashire Teaching Hospitals online resource:

<https://covidpatientsupport.lthtr.nhs.uk>

Covid-19 Supporting Your Recovery - **eating well to help you recover.**

If you have ongoing concerns about your eating and drinking please speak with your GP.