

## Getting the most from nutritional supplements

Taking enough food and fluid is vital to keep your body strong and aid healing. If you are unwell or recovering from an operation, you may need more nourishment at a time when you feel less like eating.

You have been prescribed a supplement, which is packed with energy and vitamins in an easy-to-take form.

Try to eat 'little and often' as well. The leaflet "Poor Appetite, Losing Weight" gives ideas for nourishing meals, snacks and drinks. Ask your dietitian for a copy.

The person recommending the supplement will suggest how many to take each day.

### Varieties are available

Supplements can broadly be divided into milk based, yoghurt-style, fruit juice based, savoury and neutral/original. Discuss with the person recommending the supplement which you might prefer; variety is the spice of life, so do ask for a range of flavours.

### How to take the supplement

- Take between meals, after meals or before bedtime so it does not affect your appetite.
- Sip slowly to avoid feeling over-full and to aid digestion.
- If a whole carton is too much to take in one go, have small tots regularly, storing the opened carton in the fridge.
- Please request only as many supplements as you feel you can use to avoid waste.
- Supplements taste better chilled so why not put a few in the fridge ready for the next day?
- Try supplements warm too e.g. chocolate, coffee, savoury flavours (do not warm in the carton and avoid boiling the supplement.)
- Mix juice style supplements with lemonade or soda for a refreshing drink, or freeze ice lollies.

### Using the supplements in cooking

- Contact the company producing your supplement for a recipe leaflet (see overleaf for web addresses).
- Try freezing a supplement and serving as ice cream/fruit ice.
- Whip a milk based supplement, mix with equal amounts of whipped cream and freeze to make softer dairy ice cream.
- Use a fruit juice based supplement to make up a jelly.

### Storing the cartons

- Choose a cool place, not next to a radiator or heater.
- Once opened, keep at room temperature for no more than four hours.
- Opened cartons can be kept in the fridge for 24 hours.
- Some chemists will deliver them for you if you request this when you hand in your prescription.

**REMEMBER:** If you cannot manage the supplement or no longer require them contact the person who recommended them for advice.

**Useful web addresses:**

Abbott Nutrition (Ensure Plus): [www.abbottnutritionuk.com](http://www.abbottnutritionuk.com)

Fresenius Kabi (Fresubin): [www.fresenius-kabi.co.uk](http://www.fresenius-kabi.co.uk)

Nutricia (Fortisip): [www.nutricia-clinical-care.co.uk](http://www.nutricia-clinical-care.co.uk)

Nestle (Clinutren): [www.nestle.co.uk/Nutrition/HealthcareNutrition/](http://www.nestle.co.uk/Nutrition/HealthcareNutrition/)

**If you have any questions contact a dietitian at:**

Bedford Hospital on 01234 792171 or in the community on 01234 310545.

Alternatively you can email [dietetics@bedfordhospital.nhs.uk](mailto:dietetics@bedfordhospital.nhs.uk)