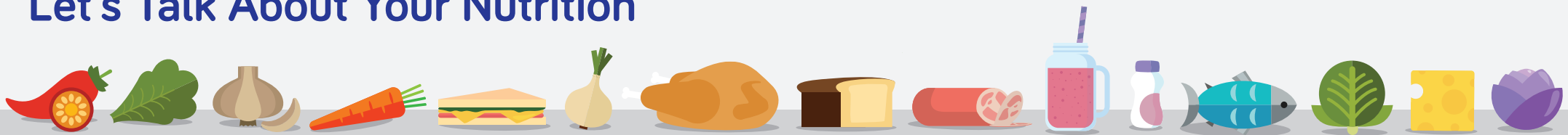




# Let's Talk About Your Nutrition



**Malnutrition occurs when the body doesn't get enough of the right nutrients, in the right amounts.**

Anyone can develop malnutrition but in Ireland it usually occurs in people who are unwell. **You may be more at risk if you are:**

- 65 years or older
- Living with a long-term health condition (for example lung disease)
- Living with cancer
- Experiencing difficulties swallowing
- Living alone

Those who are overweight can also be at risk of malnutrition.



**Keeping yourself well nourished involves eating the right amount of energy, protein and other nutrients, like vitamins and minerals, that your body needs to work at its best.**

**Good nutrition can:**






- Support your overall health, including immune health
- Help you to recover from illness or injury
- Benefit your mood and overall well-being
- Improve your energy levels and support you to have the strength and independence to continue doing the things you love

Malnutrition can put you at higher risk of falls and frailty, infections and lead to poorer recovery from illness or surgery.



**Spotting the signs that you may not be getting the nutrition you need. Take action if you might say:**



-  I'm **losing weight** without trying to.
-  My **clothes feel too big** and don't fit like before..
-  I'm **not finishing my meals** like I used to.
-  I have **no interest in cooking or eating lately.**
-  **I don't have the same energy** as I used to.

**What should I do if I notice any of the above signs in myself or a loved one?**



**Here are some steps** you can take while waiting to speak to a doctor, nurse or dietitian:

- Aim for 3 small meals per day, with snacks in between. See suggested snacks list overleaf.
- If there are times in the day when your appetite is best, try to eat your bigger meal at those times.
- Nourishing drinks are a good way to get in some extra energy and protein. See suggested nourishing drinks overleaf.
- Try eating little amounts of food often throughout the day.
- Include a high protein food (e.g. meat, poultry, fish, eggs, cheese, nuts, beans, pulses, tofu) with a starchy food (e.g. rice, pasta, bread, potatoes) at each meal.
- Avoid overfilling your plate, as this may put you off eating.
- Avoid low-fat or diet foods at this time, unless you have been previously advised by a healthcare professional to opt for these types of foods.

## Nourishing Snacks & Drinks



- **Sweet:** Rice pudding, custard, yogurts (with or without honey/ granola/seeds), flapjacks, cereal bars, scones or banana bread.



- **Savoury:** cheese, nut butter or hummus/ guacamole with crackers/toast/ breadsticks, handful of nuts/seeds, natural yogurt or savoury scone.



- **Drinks:** milk, milky coffees (e.g. latte), malt drinks, hot chocolate made on milk, homemade smoothies made with yogurt or milk as a base.

**Your doctor, nurse or dietitian may recommend that you start taking an Oral Nutritional Supplement (ONS) to help optimise your nutritional intake.**

These are drinks containing a concentrated source of energy, protein, vitamins and minerals. ONS come in many different flavours, styles and sizes and should always be taken in addition to meals and snacks. Always follow your healthcare professionals advice on ONS.

**Don't wait to be asked about your nutrition.**

Keep an eye on how you've been eating and feeling. If you notice any of the signs mentioned in this booklet, speak to your doctor, nurse or dietitian.



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Supported by an unrestricted educational grant from:

