

Food First: Advice for eating if you have lost weight or are underweight – plant-based diets

You may have been given this leaflet because you have lost weight, are at risk of weight loss or are trying to gain weight. **If you have swallowing difficulties, specific dietary requirements or have diabetes, this leaflet may not be right for you.** Please speak to your GP as they may need to refer you to a Dietitian.

What do I need to do to prevent further weight loss and promote weight gain?

- ① Aim to have 2 nourishing drinks each day (see below) and,
- ② Include 2 high energy snacks each day from the list below and,
- ③ Aim to eat 3 meals a day that have been fortified (see below)

It is generally recommended to **aim for an additional 500 calories (energy) per day to support weight gain.**

Ideally this should include high protein foods to help prevent muscle loss and restore lost muscle. It is important to include protein sources such as Quorn™, soya, tofu, beans, lentils, seitan, quinoa, oats, nuts and seeds in your diet. If you need more help with a protein-rich diet, speak to your GP who may be able to refer you to a Dietitian. If you have renal disease you may need to limit your protein intake.

① Aim to have 2 nourishing drinks each day:

- **Choose a plant-based milk with the highest calories and protein per 100ml.** Soya-based drinks will be the highest in protein. 'Barista' and 'Whole' versions will be higher in calories. Avoid organic versions as these will not be fortified with calcium and iodine. See examples →
- If you aren't keen on milky drinks, choose soya, coconut or oat yoghurts or desserts instead. Increase the energy and protein by adding fruit, nuts, seeds, golden syrup and granola or muesli on top.



Have a homemade nourishing drink twice per day:

Homemade milkshakes can be more affordable and just as nutritious. Give our recipe a go or ask your healthcare professional for our '*homemade fortified dairy-free drinks*' resource for more recipes:

- **200mls chocolate soya drink** (like Alpro® Protein Chocolate [higher in protein], or Alpro® Chocolate)
- **2 tablespoons (30ml) of vegan cream** (e.g. Elmlea® Plant or Oatly® Whippable)
- **1 tablespoon (~15g) of peanut or other nut butter**
- **½ a banana**

Directions: Add the ingredients to a blender and mix until smooth, serve chilled.

Recipe made with Alpro® Protein Chocolate and Elmlea® Plant cream provides approximately 350kcal and 13g of protein.

Dislike peanut butter or banana? Simply stir the vegan cream into the chocolate soya drink for a drink that provides 310kcal and 10g of protein. You can increase the protein in either of these drinks by adding a scoop of vegan protein powder e.g. soy, whey or hemp protein. Using seeds such as chia or flaxseeds will help to add more protein and increase the fibre content of a milkshake or smoothie.



Prefer hot drinks?

Mix a vegan hot chocolate or malted drink powder with heated (not boiled) soy or oat milk. Adding vegan marshmallows and whipped cream to a hot chocolate will increase the energy content even further!

- Vegan protein powders include soy, pea, hemp, rice or protein ‘blends’ that contain a mixture of protein sources and can be found in some supermarkets, but are mostly available online.** These generally have around 100 calories per scoop/serving but the calories and protein can be increased further by mixing these with a milk alternative (soya is the best option).
 Protein powders can be mixed with a milk alternative and drank as a drink on their own. Alternatively, you can make a higher energy/protein smoothie by adding additional nut butter, ground nuts, chia or flaxseed, syrup, oats, banana or other fruits.
- You can also buy plant-based bottled or powdered shakes in shops and online.** Some of these will be marketed as ‘meal replacement’ or ‘diet’ style shakes however we advise having these between meals as a snack/drink **and** mixing with a higher calorie milk alternative rather than water. For example use ‘Barista’ or ‘Whole’ milks or Alpro® Soya Protein/Alpro® Growing Up Drink which are higher in calories and/or protein. Here are some examples:

Ready to drink milk alternatives or milkshakes: nutrition per 250mls

yfood®	Huel®	Bol® Power Shake	Alpro® Protein Chocolate	Alpro® Protein	Mighty® M.Ik Shake
250kcal/ 13g protein per 250ml	200kcal/ 10g protein per 250ml	180kcal/ 11g protein per 250ml	173kcal/ 15g protein per 250ml	143kcal/ 15g protein per 250ml	163kcal/ 5g protein per 250ml

Powdered shakes (mix with a milk alternative or into a smoothie): nutrition per serving/scoop mixed with water. The nutrition will be increased further if mixed with a milk alternative.

Huel® Powder 400kcal/30g protein per 100g	Bulk® 1 Complete Food Shake 400kcal/30g protein per 100g	MyProtein® Whole Fuel Blend 400kcal/25g protein per 100g	Protein Works® Vegan Complete 360 Meal 400kcal/25g protein per 88g	yfood® Vegan Powder 387kcal/29g protein per 100g
Protein Works® Vegan Complete 360 Meal 249kcal/21g protein per 100g	USN® Diet Fuel VEGAN 210kcal/26g protein per 55g	Purition® Vegan Wholefood Powder 191kcal/15g protein per 40g	MyVegan® Vegan Diet Blend 164kcal/25g protein per 40g	Form® Superblend 154kcal/20g protein per 40g

② Include 2 high energy snacks each day:

Including a snack mid-morning, mid-afternoon and potentially before bed can help to add extra energy to your daily diet. Eating 'little and often' is an effective way to spread your intake across the day if you have a small appetite. Try to choose at least 2-3 of the following snacks per day.

Some of these snacks may be lower in energy and protein e.g. fruit, but pairing them with options like vegan cream or ice cream can increase the energy further.

It is sensible to check the ingredients list of each product/recipe to ensure it is plant-based. Some of these recipes will only be plant-based if they are homemade with a milk alternative.

Sweet options

- Soya, oat or coconut yoghurt or dessert topped with fruit, dried fruit, nuts, chia or flax seeds or golden syrup.
- Dried fruit – plain or coated, date and nut balls, banana chips.
- Dairy-free chocolate bar or squares.
- Vegan biscuits, cakes, muffins, cookies, tarts, flapjacks, cereal/protein bars or shortbreads.
- Vegan croissant, pain au chocolat or pastries.
- Vegan malt loaf or fruit cake.
- Vegan scone with vegan cream and jam.
- Tinned fruit with vegan cream.
- Rice pudding, kheer, semolina or crème brûlée made with a milk alternative.
- Maize meal or cornmeal porridge made with milk alternative.
- Chia seed pudding made with a milk alternative.
- Vegan chocolate mousse.
- Smoothie made with milk alternatives, fruit, nut butter and chia or flax seeds.
- Vegan waffles or pancakes.
- Peanut butter on banana or toast.
- Fresh or tinned fruit with vegan cream, ice cream or custard .
- Slices of banana with nut butter.
- Vegan ice cream, ice lolly or kulfi made with coconut milk.
- Shrikhand or halwa made with soya or coconut yoghurt/milk and vegan ghee or oil.
- Lassi, chaas or milkshake made with milk alternatives.
- Chin chin fried pastry made with plant-based spread and milk, banana fritters.
- Jamaican peanut drops.
- Dorayaki, melon pan, manju, dango, daifuku, castella, anpan, pineapple buns or youtiao made with plant-based alternatives.

Savoury options

- Vegan cheese and crackers.
- Crackers, bagel, toast, rice cakes or oatcakes with vegan cream cheese, guacamole, houmous, tapenade or nut butters.
- Nuts or trail mix, toasted soybeans (edamame), watermelon seeds.
- Chickpea, hummus or lentil crisps.
- Sandwiches or wraps.
- Crumpets.
- Crudités or pitta with houmous, falafels.
- Mini vegan pizzas.
- Vegan pasty, quiche or sausage roll.
- Quorn™ vegan nuggets, sticky BBQ wings, fishless finger/scampi, crunchy strips and mini fillets.
- Creamy soup with bread.
- Bombay mix.
- Poppadoms with chutney or pickles.
- Onion bhaji, pakora, samosas, handvo.
- Patties, fish fritters, coco bread or pastechi made with vegetable spread.
- Puri, dhebra, dokla, thepla.
- Chapatti and dahl, naan bread.
- Khichdi made with coconut or vegetable oil.
- Tortilla or vegan crisps, popcorn or pretzels.
- Plantain or cassava chips, fried plantain.
- Rice crackers, senbei, wasabi peas, seaweed crisps.
- Vegan Arancini balls.
- Ramen noodles.
- Mochi.
- Vegetable sushi, rice paper rolls, gyoza, arare
- Dumplings, steamed or bao buns, turnip cake, fried dough twist, shaobing or spring rolls made with vegan ingredients.

3 Aim to eat 3 meals a day that have been fortified

You can add extra calories to your meals without significantly increasing the volume. This is known as 'food fortification'. Enriching foods in this way can be helpful if you have a small appetite. This can be done to either home-cooked meals or shop-bought ready meals. Examples include:

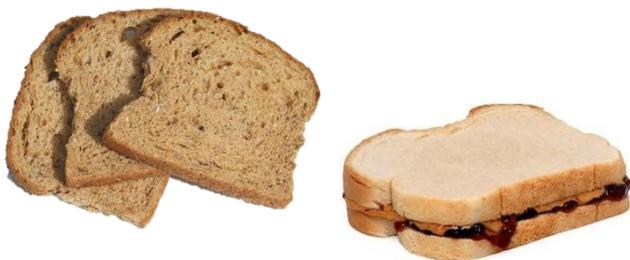
To mashed potato or soups....



Add....

- Vegetable spread
- Vegan cream cheese
- Milk alternatives

To bread, toast or sandwiches....



Add....

- Vegetable spread
- Vegan cheese/cream cheese
- Nut butters
- Jam or marmalade
- Dairy-free chocolate spread
- Avocado
- Vegan mayonnaise or salad cream

To main meals or sauces....



Add....

- Vegetable spread
- Vegan cheese/cream cheese
- Vegan mayonnaise
- Vegan cream
- Avocado
- Beans/pulses
- Oil
- Coconut cream
- Milk alternatives

To cereal, porridge, smoothies, hot drinks or puddings....

Fortified porridge: **553kcal, 20g protein!**

- 50g oats
- 200ml soya milk
- 1 tbsp peanut butter
- 1 tbsp chia seeds
- 1 banana, sliced or mashed



Add....

- Sugar, syrups or jaggery
- Jam or marmalade
- Vegan cream or coconut cream
- Dried or fresh fruit
- Vegan marshmallows
- Ground nuts and seeds
- Nut butters
- Protein powder
- Plant-based milk or yoghurts
- Vegan ice cream

What about healthy eating? When someone is at risk of malnutrition, healthy eating guidelines do not apply. Try to avoid low fat, low sugar and diet food and drinks as these will be lower in energy. The above advice includes high fat foods which some people worry will harm their heart, however malnutrition itself is a risk to heart health.