NHS
Camden
Clinical Commissioning Group

What if I want to continue taking oral nutritional supplements after my treatment goals have been reached?

Oral nutritional supplements are not necessary if you are eating a normal diet or have met your treatment goals.
If you wish to continue taking similar nourishment drinks, you can buy these from your local supermarket or pharmacy. A health care professional will be able to advise you further.

Tips

Please read the accompanying advice sheets “Food First” and the “Your guide to making the most of your food”. These contain ideas on how to boost your usual diet by enriching / fortifying your food.

Please note if you follow a special diet (e.g. halal, kosher, vegetarian, vegan) please seek further medical/dietetic advice on the suitability of the oral nutritional products for you.

With thanks and acknowledgment to www.malnutritionpathway.co.uk nutrition advice sheet and the London Procurement Programme “A Guide to Prescribing Oral Nutritional Supplements in the Community”, from which this leaflet is adapted.
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Working with the people of Camden to achieve the best health for all

Oral Nutritional Supplements

Information for when you might need to BOOST your food intake

What are oral nutritional supplements?

Oral nutritional supplements are powdered or ready-made drinks that are enriched with vitamins, minerals and have additional protein and calories.

Why do I need oral nutritional supplements?

If you are unwell or recovering from an illness, injury or an operation, you may need more nutrients than usual. Your appetite might be poor and you could have difficulty eating or swallowing. This can affect the amount of food you eat.

It is best to meet your nutritional requirements through your normal diet, or by supplementing your food. However, if you are unable to do so these nutritional supplement drinks provide an alternative option. They could help you maintain your body weight or regain weight you may have lost recently.

How do I get them?

Your GP will prescribe these for you if you meet certain criteria (e.g. you are malnourished, or at risk of malnutrition). You will be given a small supply initially to see if they are suitable for you. Following this, you will receive up to one month's supply at a time, with regular reviews to check whether they are still necessary.

How long do I need to take oral nutritional supplements?

Your health care professional (e.g. your GP, Nurse or Dietician) will set specific treatment goals with you (for example reaching a certain weight, or when a wound has healed). You should have a regular review (approximately every 4 weeks) to monitor your progress.

If you are started on oral nutritional supplements in hospital, when you are discharged, you should discuss with your GP whether you need to carry on taking them. You may no longer need the supplements or you may need a change to the type you are taking.

It is important to remember that these nutritional supplement drinks are only necessary during periods of illness. Once your treatment goals have been met, you will no longer need them.

Your treatment goal is:

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How and when do I take them?

Nutritional supplement drinks are to boost your normal meals and should be a 'top-up'. They should not replace meals. You should take them between meal times so they will not affect your appetite. Your health care professional will tell you how many nutritional supplements are necessary to meet your needs or medical condition. This is usually 2 or 3 supplements a day, but it will depend on circumstances. The supplements will help improve your dietary intake. It is important that you take the recommended dose each day.

Recommended daily dose:

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How do I store them?

Check the use by date. Store in a cool, dry place, away from radiators and other sources of heat. They do not need to be refrigerated, but most taste best when served chilled. Once powdered shakes have been made up, or ready-made drinks opened, they must be stored in the fridge, and should be consumed within 24 hours.