

32. Preparing Meals & Drinks

Fatigue and other side-effects of treatment such as nausea can make preparing meals and drinks difficult. However it is very important that you continue to eat well and drink plenty of fluids as under-nutrition can make these problems worse and impact on your treatment and it's outcomes.

How can I manage this?

Eating small regular meals and snacks is often more manageable than 3 large meals per day, so ignore the rules and eat what you want when you feel at your best.

Convenience foods such as frozen meals, tinned foods and ready meals are also good for when you want something quick and easy to prepare. These foods can be purchased when you are feeling well and kept for the days you don't feel so good. You can also make the most of your good days by planning ahead and cooking your favourite foods for freezing and use later on. Alternatively you could also try a meal delivery company (see below for further information).

Note: Remember to defrost frozen foods thoroughly and cook all foods properly to avoid any risk of food poisoning. This is also a good opportunity to give family and friends the chance to help by doing some shopping or cooking for you.

If you really can't face eating, try a nourishing drink. You can make a smoothie by blending bananas, peaches, strawberries or other soft fruit (fresh or frozen) with milk, fruit juice, ice cream or yoghurt. Alternatively you could try drinks such as milk, ready made smoothies, fruit juice, cocoa, Horlicks, and Ovaltine as they are often more nutritious than water, low calorie drinks, tea and coffee. Some high calorie, fortified drinks and soups are also available via supermarkets and pharmacies e.g. Complan and Build-Up.

If problems with eating and/or drinking persist and it is impacting upon your weight, mood or energy levels your GP/ District Nurse and local Dietetic department can support you in identifying ways of preparing and accessing nutritious meals and they may also consider nutritional supplements.

Frozen Meal Delivery Service

Some companies offer a frozen meal delivery service, each week you choose the meals you would like place your order and when they are delivered you pay the delivery person with either cash or cheque. Place the meals in the freezer until they are ready to be cooked either in conventional oven, microwave or Mikrofix microwave (- bespoke microwave which enables customers to heat meals with one press of a button. Each meal lid shows a corresponding button to press on the microwave)

Some people may be eligible for help towards the cost of this service, speak to local authority social work services for eligibility criteria.