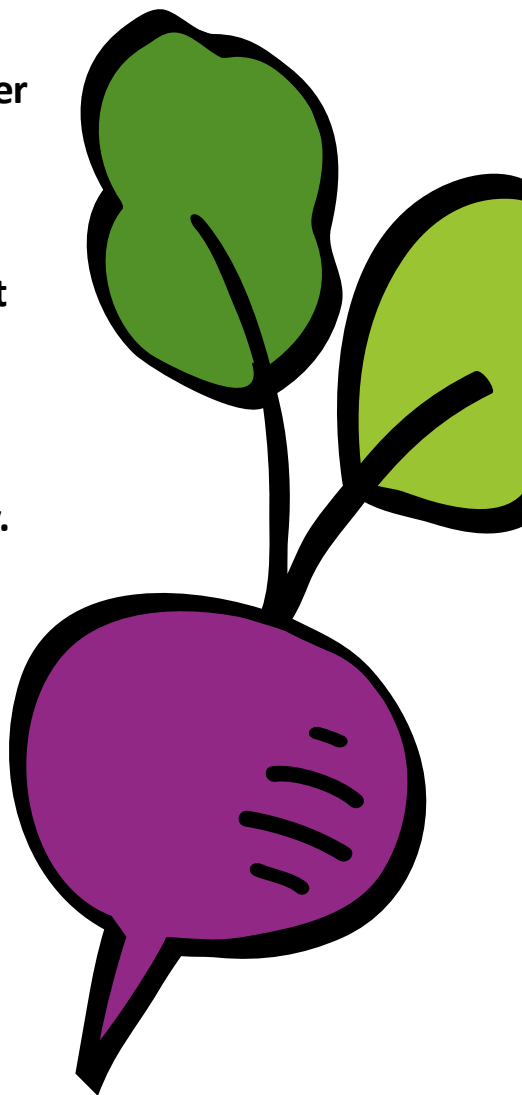


Eating well to stay healthy as you age

An information booklet for older people, their families, friends, carers and anyone who may be helping an older person make decisions about their diet and health.

This booklet is for people who might not be eating enough of the right foods to be healthy.

It is designed to help you spot the signs of malnutrition and suggests ideas to help you to prevent it.



Brighton & Hove

F   **D**
Partnership

What is malnutrition and why is it important?

- Malnutrition is defined as a lack of one or more nutrient in your diet
- Not eating enough is a serious risk as you age
- Dehydration, or not drinking enough, is also dangerous
- A person is malnourished if they do not eat or drink enough and this can lead to longer term health problems
- You are more likely to become ill, leading to an increase in hospital admissions and it can delay the time it takes to recover from illness
- It affects physical, emotional and mental well-being
- It can lead to depression and social isolation
- Severe cases of malnutrition can result in early death

Keep this booklet for future reference, there may come a time when you need it.

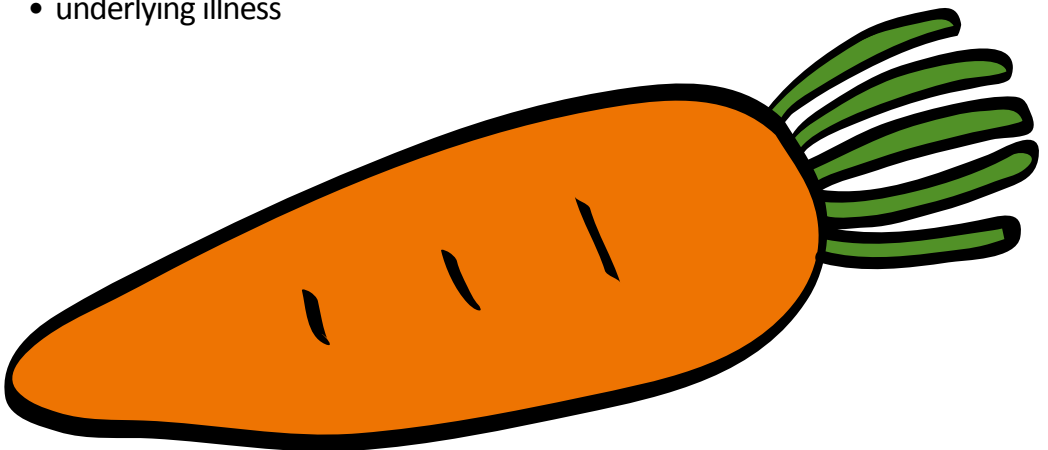


If you are concerned about your weight, or any recent weight loss, then it is a good idea to speak to your GP or practice nurse.

Not eating properly can cause malnutrition

Older people are at increased risk due to:

- poor diet
- dehydration
- changes to appetite
- loss of sight
- a recent stay in hospital
- difficulty swallowing
- dental problems, including dentures
- long term health conditions such as arthritis, dementia, Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and Parkinson's Disease
- underlying illness
- lack of mobility
- the increasing cost of living
- bereavement
- social isolation and low mood
- medication which affects the taste of food
- physical problems making it difficult to shop and cook
- lack of motivation to shop, cook and eat
- eating alone most of the time



Key signs

Questions to ask:

1. Are you eating less than usual?
2. Have you suddenly lost weight?
3. Are you losing weight without trying?
4. Do you feel weak, tired or lacking energy?
5. Do you often forget to drink, or not feel like drinking?
6. Are your clothes or jewellery loose?
7. Do you have little or no food in the fridge or cupboards?
8. Do you struggle to prepare meals and snacks?
9. Have you lost interest in cooking?
10. Do you feel cold most of the time?
11. Are you often ill and find it difficult to recover?
12. Do you find it difficult or painful to eat or chew?
13. Do you find it difficult to get to the shops and buy food?

If you are at all concerned about any of these questions please speak to your GP or practice nurse.



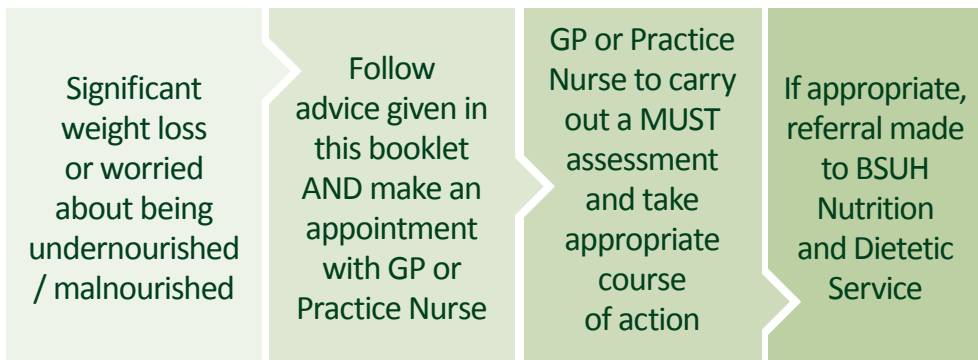
Sudden weight loss is not a normal part of ageing. It can be a sign of malnutrition or other illness and should not be overlooked

If you have suddenly or unintentionally lost a significant amount of weight in the past 3-6 months then you might be malnourished. If you are concerned for yourself or someone else there is a simple screening process.

Your GP or Practice Nurse can carry out an assessment called a Malnutrition Universal Screening Tool (MUST)) to see if you are malnourished.

Based on this, they may refer you to Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals (BSUH) Nutrition and Dietetics Service (based at the Royal Sussex County Hospital) for further assessment, review and support.

The screening process



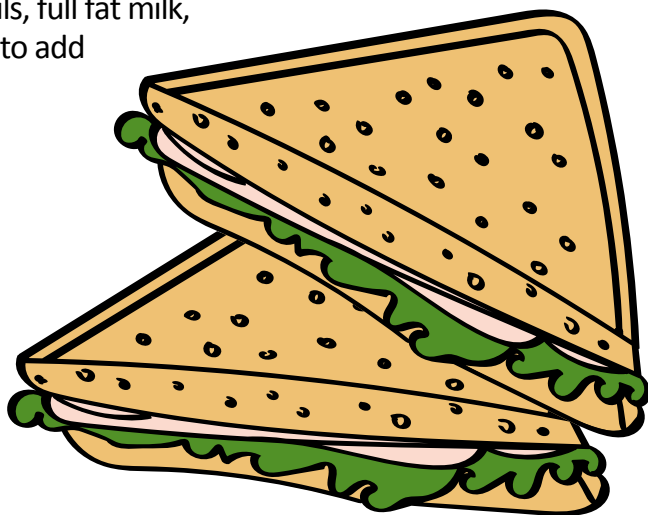
How to prevent becoming undernourished – what to eat

Try to eat little and often

Small nutritious meals and snacks should be eaten every 2-3 hours. Keep it simple by choosing small portions of foods that you enjoy.

Try:

- Crackers with cheese
- Dips e.g. hummus or mashed avocado served with crackers/breadsticks
- Malt loaf, fruit scones or toasted teacakes with butter, jam or peanut butter
- Individual pots of yoghurts (full fat), rice pudding or custard
- Soups (using lentils, full fat milk, cheese or cream to add protein and fat)
- Sandwiches made with a variety of different fillings e.g. cold meat, tuna, soft or grated cheese, egg, peanut butter, avocado, hummus
- Baked beans, sardines, cheese or egg on toast
- Milky drinks e.g. Horlicks or Ovaltine



Choose full fat

If you are below a healthy weight or have a small appetite, low fat diets and foods are not suitable. Instead, choose full fat dairy products such as whole milk, milk powder, double cream, cheese, butter, soups and mashed potatoes. Cream or custard can be added to desserts. Try adding butter or oil to mashed potato and scrambled eggs.

What foods will help?

Choose nutrient rich avocado, peanut butter, full fat milk, full fat yoghurts, butter, double cream, cheese and crackers. Consider soups, stews and ready meals which include at least one portion of vegetables. Avoid those labelled 'low fat'.

Add dried milk powder, or full fat milk as an easy way to enrich food and drinks with energy and protein. Make sure items in the cupboard are easy to open and prepare such as ready meals.



Diet variety

Eat a mixture of fruit and vegetables each day for vitamins and minerals to support the immune system. Fresh, frozen, tinned and dried fruit all count. Constipation is common; and fibre is important. However, too many high fibre foods are not suitable as they are low energy and can fill you up quickly. Choose soluble fibre e.g. porridge oats, lentils and pulses.

Fluids

Not drinking enough puts you at risk of dehydration. Try to have 8 cups of fluids a day. This doesn't have to be water as tea, coffee and squash all count but avoid fizzy drinks as they can fill you up. A small amount of alcohol can stimulate appetite; however it's important to be aware of possible interactions between alcohol and medication. Have a jug or easy to open bottle of water nearby to remind you to drink.

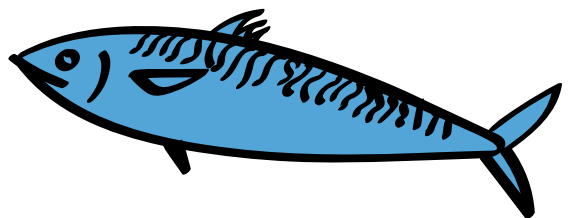
Oily fish

Try to eat fish twice a week, one of which should be oily. Oily fish are rich in omega-3 fats which are important for heart health and brain function. Oily fish include salmon, mackerel, sardines, kippers, anchovies and herring.

Other considerations

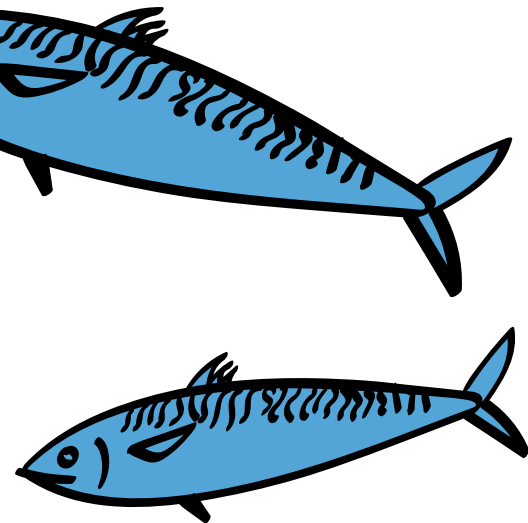
If your teeth or dentures are proving problematic, make an appointment with the dentist. If you are experiencing difficulty chewing or swallowing, speak with your GP who can make a referral to the Speech and Language Therapy team.

If you are concerned and would like to speak to a dietitian regarding recent weight loss, please make an appointment with your GP.



Tips for eating on a budget

- Try shopping around
- Local markets often sell food in smaller amounts
- Supermarket 'value' brands are often cheaper
- Frozen and tinned items such as fruit or fish are just as good as fresh
- Fruits and vegetables in season are tastier and cheaper
- Supermarkets reduce prices on foods closer to the end of the day
- Supermarkets often have multibuy offers on ready meals



Cooking for one

Eating well while living on your own can be a challenge. If you are struggling, try the following:

- Buying fresh food. Sights and smells can stimulate appetite
- When you do feel motivated, try making a larger batch of soup, stews or casseroles and freeze them in individual portions
- Try eating a regular snack or meal when you watch your favourite TV programme
- Eating with other people can also help boost appetite. Why not invite a friend or relative to join you, or join them. There are lots of shared meal settings in the city. Turn to page 13 for more information
- If choosing ready meals, look for those that include a portion of vegetables. Watch out for those which are high in salt. Check they contain a portion of starch such as potatoes, rice or pasta
- Many supermarkets offer online shopping and delivery for an extra cost

If you are caring for an older person:

1. Discover food memories and find out favourite foods
2. Consider likes and dislikes
3. Present a variety of food in an attractive and appealing way
4. Provide a choice of meals and snacks
5. Pay attention to texture, taste, flavour and appearance
6. Think about cultural and religious backgrounds
7. Avoid over-repetition and stimulate an interest in food
8. Provide enough time between meals to allow for digestion
9. Be flexible with the timings of meals
10. Make sure water is available
11. Try to visit around mealtimes so you can eat together – or share a meal

Casserole Club

“Tackling social isolation and intergenerational disconnect through community meal-sharing”

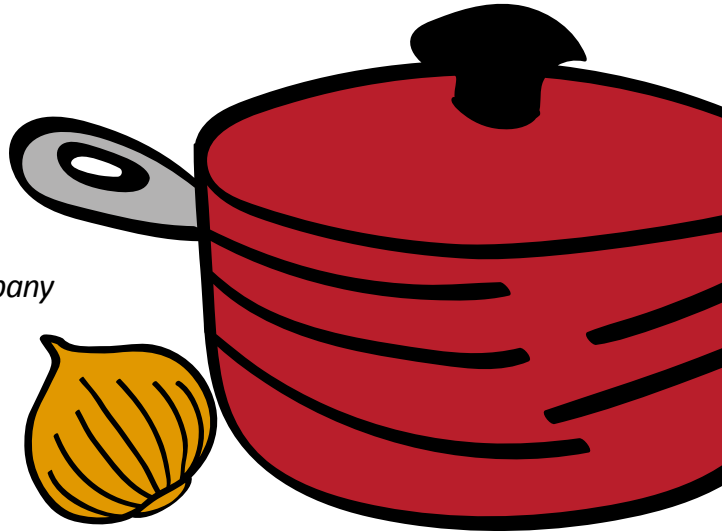
A community service in Brighton & Hove that matches volunteers who like to cook with others in their area that would benefit from a meal and a friendly chat. Cooks and diners agree how often they will meet up and both benefit from the relationship sharing food and stories. All the cooks are DBS criminal records checked and have their food hygiene knowledge assessed before they are matched with someone.

If you would like to learn more or sign up call us on **01273 431 700** or email **casserole@bhfood.org.uk**

Find more information at **www.bhfood.org.uk/Casserole-Club**

If you are an organisation that wants to become a referrer for Casserole Club please call **01273 431 700** and we can set you up.

“Casserole Club is a truly lovely way to give both a tasty meal and friendship to a lonely elderly person. The company and conversation are something both participants look forward to.”



Local information

Age UK Brighton & Hove provides practical help and support to local older people. It offers general information and advice on a range of issues and can also refer on to other agencies and services in the city. Call 01273 720603 or email: info@ageuk-bh.org.uk

Some local companies deliver fresh meals. Please call them to find out about costs.

Local companies who deliver fresh meals

License to Freeze

(also deliver basic groceries)

01323 643726

www.licensetofreeze.co.uk

office@licensetofreeze.co.uk

Mother Theresa's Foods

01323 441114

www.mothertheresas.co.uk

Brilyn Ltd

01273 612733

www.mealsonwheels.uk.com

info@mealsonwheels.uk.com

Frozen ready meals

Love Food

01243 859420

www.lovefoodreadymeals.com

Cook

01732 759000

www.cookfood.net

Other food services

www.mylifebh.org.uk search 'meals on wheels'

www.itslocalactually.org.uk search 'support at home'

Lunch clubs, shared meals and community cafes

Shared meals bring people together to eat and can reduce social isolation. There are lots of places offering free or cheap meals across the city. For the full list, please call the Food Partnership on **01273 431 700** and we can post the list to you.

If you have internet access, you can get the full list from **www.itslocalactually.org.uk/activity-search/** which lists by postcode. Put 'lunch club' as a keyword. Or go to **www.bhfood.org.uk/accessing-low-cost-meals** and download the full list.

Details of a selection of lunch clubs. Please bear in mind that costs may vary and details may change, please contact them direct:

The Real Junk Food Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- St Lukes Church, Old Shoreham Road <i>Monday – Wednesday 1pm-3pm</i>- Hollingdean Community Centre, Thompson Rd, <i>Thursday 1pm-3pm</i>- One Church Brighton, Gloucester Place <i>Friday 1pm-3pm</i>
Hove Lunch Club	Hove Methodist Church, Portland Road 01273 728678 <i>Tuesday 12.30pm-2.30pm Thursday 1pm-3pm</i> Includes local transport if required.
Knoll Lunch Club	St Richards, Egmont Road, Hove 01273 414483 <i>Thursday 11.15am-1.30pm</i>
The Hop 50+	Palmeira Square, Hove 01273 729603 <i>Daily lunch at 12.30pm</i>
The Bevy Community Kitchen	01273 281009 <i>Monday – Friday 12pm-2.30pm</i>

Age UK Brighton & Hove Help at Home service

Age UK offer domestic home help for a fee. For more information call **01273 765275** or email **helpathome@ageuk-bh.org.uk**

Befriending

Opportunity to be linked up with a volunteer befriender to help combat loneliness and isolation. Contact the Befriending Coalition by calling **01273 229005** or email **contact@bhbefriending.org**

CareLink Personal Alarms

Personal alarms that can be worn around the neck and can be worn both inside and out of the home. Call **0300 123 3301**.

Dementia Action Alliance Brighton & Hove

Call **01273 720603** for further information regarding the alliance or contact the **Alzheimer's Society** on **01273 726266**.

Community Transport

Easylink provide a community transport service for those who find it difficult to get to the shops. There is a fee. Contact directly for up to date information **01273 677559**.

East Sussex Fire and Rescue

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service offers free Home Safety Visits to check/fit smoke alarms. Safety advice is offered including kitchen and cooking safety. They can also discuss specialist equipment e.g. for those with sensory impairments. For a visit please telephone **01323 462177**.

Information for carers

For further support please contact the Carers Centre on **01273 746222**.

Age UK Brighton & Hove Computer Skills

Call 01273 720603

29-31 Prestonville Road,
Brighton BN1 3TJ

*IT Drop-In Service. Monday
to Thursday. 10am – 1pm.
Free for over 50's*

One-to-one support with online shopping. Look up shops & supermarkets on the internet, shop for groceries and other essentials, create a regular shopping list, book delivery and pay for shopping securely and safely.

Digital Brighton & Hove

Find IT classes and places to access the internet at a range of locations, including the city's libraries.

Many classes are free. Full listings at **www.digitalbrightonandhove.org.uk**


Malnutrition Task Force

National organisation with a website containing resources and studies to help agencies supporting older people.

Call **020 3033 1522** or visit **www.malnutritiontaskforce.org.uk**

Brighton and Hove Food Partnership

The Food Partnership is a hub for information, inspiration and connection around food. They run a range of community projects including community gardens and advice around food poverty. Call **01273 431700** or find information at **www.bhfood.org.uk**



As you age there may come a time when you can't shop or cook for yourself and the risk of malnutrition increases. Please keep this booklet for future reference.

This booklet has been written by the Food Partnership as recommended by the Age Friendly City report into healthy ageing and food. It has been produced in partnership with Age UK Brighton & Hove and funded by the Brighton & Hove Clinical Commissioning Group, Mental Health Innovation Fund, Age UK Brighton & Hove and the Food Partnership.

Health Engagement research carried out by Age UK Brighton & Hove in 2016 identified the need for more information on malnutrition and how to avoid it.

Published May 2017

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www.bhfood.org.uk

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Brighton BN1 3TJ
T: **01273 720603** or visit
www.ageuk-bh.org.uk

Thanks and credit to:

- Malnutrition Task Force ‘Are you Eating Enough’ Booklet*
- Claire Godley, Age UK Brighton & Hove ‘Healthy Eating and Malnutrition’ report*
- Focus Group of older people held in 2017 at Age UK Brighton & Hove*
- BSUH Nutrition and Dietetic Service*