Achieving Healthy Weight Gain

Contact us on: 0330 2000 103   info@hertsindependentliving.org

www.hertsindependentliving.org
**About HILS**

Hertfordshire Independent Living Service (HILS) is the largest not-for-profit meals on wheels service in the UK. Established by Hertfordshire County Council in 2007 as a charitable social enterprise, HILS provides a range of caring services to help people to stay happy, healthy, and independent in their own homes.

We have been recognised with a number of local and national awards, and we offer a responsive and flexible service. We operate from four sites across the county, in Hemel Hempstead, Letchworth, St Albans, and Ware.

We make a real difference to people’s lives. We give support and peace of mind to thousands of Hertfordshire’s residents, their families and their friends, and we love doing it!

**Contact Details**

If you would like information about our other services, our Support Team would be delighted to tell you more about how we can help you.

**Please contact us using the details below:**

Call: 0330 2000 103 (local rate)   Email: info@hertsindependentliving.org
Visit: www.hertsindependentliving.org   Tweet: @HertsIndLiving
Write to: Hertfordshire Independent Living Service, Unit 16, Green Lane One, Blackhorse Road, Letchworth, Hertfordshire, SG6 1HB

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**Meals on Wheels**

We deliver meals on wheels across Hertfordshire, 365 days a year, whatever the weather. Every visit includes delivery of a hot meal and dessert, along with a caring welfare check, at the subsidised cost of £4.55 per day.

You can order meals as a one-off, temporarily, or for as long as you would like them. Our meals are delivered hot and ready to eat between 11:30am and 2:00pm, and you will usually receive your meal at a similar time every day.

We have a wide range of delicious and nutritious hot meals and desserts for you to choose from. A menu is provided for you to select your meals, which highlights meals that are suitable for your dietary, ethnic, and religious choices. If necessary we can alter our menu just for you to suit your needs.

Our two day free trial can be requested for all new clients, so you can taste the food, try our service, and meet our caring team!

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**HILS’ Services**

HILS provides a range of caring services to help support older and vulnerable people in Hertfordshire. This includes:

- **Meals service** – 365 day a year meals on wheels service for those living in Hertfordshire
- **Nutrition & Wellbeing Service** – individual support available to all meals clients at no additional cost
- **Medication Prompts** – additional free service to meals and pop-in clients, reminding them to take their medication
- **Pop-in Visits** – short, five minute lunch-time visits which help you to feel safer in your home, with the reassurance of someone visiting you each day
- **Advocacy** – supports people to make the right decisions regarding their care and support in Hertfordshire
- **Community Alarms and Telecare** – this service is provided by Herts Careline. HILS installs and maintains the equipment
- **Dementia Fun Clubs** – welcoming and engaging, with an exciting mix of activities for people living with mild to moderate dementia
- **Jubilee Centre** – community centre in St Albans with a weekday drop in restaurant and rooms to hire seven days a week
- **Food and Grocery packs** – free emergency food packs containing three days’ worth of food delivered to your home for those in crisis
- **Home from Hospital packs** – free grocery pack containing essentials for those leaving hospital
By eating plenty of foods rich in nutrients such as fats and protein, we can prevent further weight loss, and gain weight if we need to. This may sound daunting if you have lost your appetite or are unsure which foods to eat. But don’t worry, it’s quite easy when you know how.

**Have you experienced any of the following?**

- Eating or drinking less than you used to
- A long-term loss of appetite or feeling more tired than usual
- Finding clothes, jewellery, or dentures have become loose
- Losing weight without any intention to

If you have answered YES to any of the above, you may be at risk of being malnourished. Malnutrition is a lot more common than we think, and affects over 3 million people in the UK.

**How do we address malnutrition?**

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**1 Pint of nourishing drinks** – Making the most of drinks as well as food

**2 Energising snacks** – Having small high calorie snacks between meals

**3 Enriched meals** – Adding little extras to the meals you already eat

**Consequences of malnutrition**

- Lack of energy and reduced strength
- Unable to keep warm
- Recurrent infections
- Slower recovery from illness and delayed wound healing
- Low mood
- Constipation

“Malnutrition is preventable and can often be addressed by making just a few small changes to your diet”

**Adding extra calories can help you re-gain lost weight or prevent you from losing any more**

Generally we shouldn’t have to eat or drink bigger portions than we usually do. Instead, you can choose options with more calories, or add little extras to foods to enrich them with energy and protein.

**How much extra do I need?**

- If you have unintentionally lost some weight, or you are slightly underweight, you should aim to add an **extra 500 calories** to your diet each day
- If you have unintentionally lost a lot of weight, or are very underweight, you should aim to add an **extra 500-1000 calories**
Pint of nourishing drinks

- We should aim to drink at least 6-8 cups of fluid each day to keep us well hydrated.

- Try to make 1-2 of these drinks a nourishing drink made using enriched milk - recipe on the next page.

- Having nourishing, high calorie drinks not only helps you keep hydrated, but can also add extra nutrients to your daily diet.

Top tip – Avoid drinking too much just before a meal as this may make you feel fuller.

Benefits of using enriched milk:

- 1 pint of enriched milk provides 580 calories, 38g protein, and 52g carbohydrate.
- The nutrients in enriched milk help promote repair and recovery from illness, as well as help maintain weight, promote weight gain, and prevent unintentional weight loss.

Enriched milk recipe

Did you know?
Milk powder is readily available in supermarkets at a very low price, usually located near the UHT milk or baking section.

- If you’re not a fan of milk, fruit juice (pure or concentrated) is a good option. Other drinks like water, tea, or squash, are lower in calories but still great for keeping you hydrated.
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How do I make it?

- You need 4 tablespoons of skimmed milk powder and 1 pint (568ml) of whole milk (blue top)
- Whisk the milk powder into enough milk to make a paste, then add the rest of the milk and mix well
- You can make up enriched milk in a plastic water jug and keep it in your fridge to use throughout the day

Use in your hot drinks, like milky coffee or hot chocolate, throughout the day

Pour on your cereal or use to make porridge

Use to make a nourishing cold drink such as milkshake; please ask us for recipes

Use it to make custard or sauces, and add it to soups

Drink a glass of enriched milk with a snack
Energising snacks

- You should aim to have a snack between each meal
- These should be packed full of calories and protein to help you get well again, but small enough so they don’t fill you up

Try to pick a snack that contains around 150 calories or more. Here are some good ideas:

- Fruit with cream or ice cream
- Full-fat creamy yoghurt
- Rice pudding
- Cheese on crackers
- Slice of cake
- Dried fruit & nuts
- Pate or cream cheese on crackers
- Mini pork pie or scotch egg
- 3 party size sausage rolls
- A few biscuits

Protein Power

Protein is important for building and maintaining muscles and for wound healing. Meat, fish, eggs, beans, and pulses are great sources. Dairy is also a good source of protein. It is also rich in calcium which is important for bone health, and contains fats to boost calories and promote weight gain.

Breakfast ideas

**Porridge**

Swap semi-skimmed milk for enriched milk (see recipe on page 7) and add a dollop of cream. Add an extra topping such as 1 tablespoon of honey / chocolate spread / a few dates / chopped banana.

**Toast or crumpets**

Choose standard spread instead of low-fat and double the portion you use. Add peanut butter, sardines, scrambled eggs, cheese, full fat cream cheese, paté, lemon curd, chocolate spread.

Enriching means adding little extras to meals to provide more calories, protein, and other nutrients. This is sometimes also referred to as fortifying food. You should also choose meals that are higher in energy (calories). Foods high in fat contain a lot of calories and can be useful when trying to gain weight.

HILS clients at risk of malnutrition may receive specially chosen nutritious snacks free of charge to support with weight gain. Please get in touch if you would like to learn more about HILS services.

Top tip – when choosing a snack, try to avoid anything labelled as low-fat, low-calorie, low-sugar, or diet, and choose the full-fat versions instead.

Ideas for light meals

**Egg omelette**

Mix in a tablespoon of skimmed-milk powder, a dash of enriched milk, and a generous knob of butter or full-fat spread, full-fat cream, and 2-4oz grated cheese.

**Soup**

Add a tablespoon of cream to tinned soup or make up packet soup with enriched milk, serve with a few croutons fried in oil. You could also serve with a buttered crumpet or toast.

**Sandwiches**

Spread bread generously with butter or spread and enrich fillings with full fat mayonnaise, or cream cheese.

**Fruit:** Try adding honey, cream, creamy yoghurt, ice cream or evaporated milk to fresh fruit

**Cakes:** Choose cakes with icing, or add cream or custard

**Yogurts, trifles & puddings:** Always choose full-fat
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instead of...</th>
<th>Choose this...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Breakfast...</strong></td>
<td><strong>HILS swaps for weight gain</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Porridge made with milk (200ml)</td>
<td>Porridge made with raisins, honey and enriched milk (200ml)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra 170 calories, 7g protein</td>
<td>Extra</td>
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<tr>
<td>Toast and low fat spread</td>
<td>Toast with peanut butter / chocolate spread</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra 75 calories, 3g protein</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Lunch...</strong></td>
<td><strong>HILS swaps for weight gain</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>HILS’ Beef with roast potatoes</td>
<td>HILS’ Steak &amp; kidney pie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra 200 calories, 2g protein</td>
<td>Extra</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baked fish fingers and oven chips</td>
<td>Ready-made creamy fish pie with buttered vegetables</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra 100 calories, 2g protein</td>
<td>Extra</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chicken noodle soup</td>
<td>Cream of chicken soup</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra 41 calories, 1g protein</td>
<td>Extra</td>
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<tr>
<td>HILS’ stewed apple &amp; custard</td>
<td>HILS’ apple and blackberry crumble</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra 192 calories, 2g protein</td>
<td>Extra</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tea time...</strong></td>
<td><strong>HILS swaps for weight gain</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cheese sandwich</td>
<td>Cheese sandwich with mayo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra 165 calories, equal protein</td>
<td>Extra</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ham sandwich</td>
<td>Corned beef sandwich with mayo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra 200 calories, 10g protein</td>
<td>Extra</td>
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<tr>
<td>No added sugar jelly pot</td>
<td>Rice pudding pot - full fat</td>
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<tr>
<td>Extra 120 calories 4g protein</td>
<td>Extra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange squash</td>
<td>Orange juice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra 90 calories</td>
<td>Extra</td>
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Ask the dietitian

Michelle, HILS’ Nutrition & Wellbeing Team Leader and registered Dietitian has answered some of your frequently asked questions...

I have heard that getting thinner is a normal part of ageing – is this true?
Getting thin is NOT a normal part of ageing. Lots of factors affect our appetite, food choices, and the way we eat. It’s always important to have a healthy weight for your height no matter what age you are. If you have particular issues that you feel are affecting your eating habits, speak to your GP.

I often get constipated, what can I do to help myself?
Slowly increasing the amount of fibre you eat, and drinking 6-8 cups of fluid spread out across the day, can help with your bowel movements. Our booklet, Eating for good bowel health has some useful tips to keeping your bowels healthy. Please contact us should you require a copy. Your GP may also prescribe you with medication to help your bowel movements if you are still experiencing problems.

How do we achieve a healthy diet, whilst putting on weight?
Foods that are high in fat are also full of calories, so they are great options if you want to gain weight. However, you may feel this goes against conventional advice surrounding healthy eating. If you have heart disease or you are concerned about your cholesterol levels, choosing unsaturated fats, like olive oil and rapeseed oil, nuts or peanut butter would be a healthier option. Full-fat dairy foods are packed with calcium and protein so they are great options too. It is still important to have plenty of fruit and vegetables, but remember to fortify these by serving fruit with full-fat custard or adding unsaturated oils or spreads to vegetables. If you have further concerns, please discuss this with your GP before starting an enriched diet.

Enriching your diet if you have diabetes

Can I follow an enriched diet if I have diabetes?
If your diabetes is well controlled then you should be able to follow an enriched diet.

Should I contact my GP if I have diabetes?
We would recommend that you contact your GP or diabetes nurse for a medication review if you are prescribed insulin or sulphonylureas such as gliclazide and glipizide. Your medication dose may need adjusting and your blood glucose may need to be monitored whilst you are on an enriched diet.

You should contact your GP if:
- You have been eating and drinking well but seem to be losing weight
- Changes to your weight have been quite sudden with no apparent cause
- If you have questions about medication and whether you need to be cautious with any particular foods
- Your reduced appetite is not improving
- If you have any other health concerns, you are on a restricted diet, or on a fluid restriction for any reason, please speak directly with your GP prior to starting food fortification or changing fluid intake
- You are concerned about swallow issues

Tops tips for an enriched diet with diabetes

✔ Space out nourishing drinks throughout the day and choose smaller volumes (such as 4 drinks of 100ml instead of 2 drinks of 200ml) so that the extra carbohydrate does not have such a significant effect on your blood sugar levels.

✔ Enrich your meals with fat and protein-rich products (such as fortified milk, cheese, cream, peanut butter) rather than products that are high in sugar, although you do not have to exclude sugar altogether.

✔ You may also wish to choose heart healthy unsaturated fats such as olive or rapeseed oil when enriching foods.
HILS’ Nutrition and Wellbeing service is a one of a kind in the UK, specialising in supporting people to stay happy, healthy, and independent at home. The team consists of registered Dietitians and Nutritionists, and Nutrition & Wellbeing Visitors, who offer a range of services for HILS meals on wheels clients in Hertfordshire.

**Free nutrition & wellbeing checks**
- We will come to your home, and talk to you about your overall wellbeing, including any nutritional, lifestyle, and health issues that may be having an impact on your wellbeing.
- We will tell you about other local services that are available, that might be able to support you in other ways.
- We will provide you with more information about good hydration and nutrition, that is specific to your needs.
- We will provide you with regular and ongoing support to help you to stay well.

**Training & Education**
- We train all of our staff in nutrition and hydration, so that they can help us to identify nutritional and health issues.
- We teach people about nutrition and hydration through fun information sessions and provide resources.
- We raise awareness of nutritional issues affecting older and vulnerable people by attending key events in Hertfordshire and across the UK.

**Shopping List Guidance**

- **Essential cupboard items!**
  - Skimmed milk powder
  - Milkshake syrup/powder
  - Hot chocolate/malted milk drink powder
  - Small cakes
  - Instant dessert powders
  - Favourite biscuits
  - Sugar
  - Honey
  - Jam
  - Creamy soup
  - Chocolate spread
  - Peanut butter
  - Chocolate
  - Sardines
  - Tinned meat

- **Useful fridge essentials!**
  - Full fat milk
  - Full fat cream cheese
  - Butter / full fat spread
  - Full fat mayonnaise
  - Single or double cream
  - Full fat yoghurts
  - Sausage rolls
  - Pork Pies
  - Scotch eggs
  - Cheese
  - Eggs

Please email us nutrition@hertsindependentliving.org

**Free nutritional expertise**
- We design our menus to make sure that they are suitable for the needs of all our clients.
- We can make changes to your menu choices to help you to meet your personal nutritional needs.
- We offer extra one-to-one visits and support for those with more complex needs.

**Helping you stay well**

If you get full easily, or have lost your appetite:
- Eat little and often – aiming for 3 small meals and 2-3 small snacks in between.
- Get some fresh air and try to move around as much as you can, as this can improve your appetite.
- Eat with others once a week if you can to increase appetite; if you would like to find out more about lunch clubs in Hertfordshire, contact the free directory service HertsHelp on 0300 123 4044.
- Try swapping tea and coffee for milky drinks and ordinary fizzy or juice drinks.
- A small alcoholic drink before a meal can stimulate your appetite and is also high in calories, but make sure it is safe to drink alcohol with any medication that you are taking.
- Give yourself time to eat and avoid distractions.
- Don’t forget your oral health: Always brush your teeth at least twice daily and use a fluoride toothpaste. If you have any concerns with teeth or poorly fitting dentures, it would be worth seeing your dentist for a check-up.

Please email us nutrition@hertsindependentliving.org

**Nutrition & Wellbeing Service**

- We will come to your home, and talk to you about your overall wellbeing, including any nutritional, lifestyle, and health issues that may be having an impact on your wellbeing.
- We will tell you about other local services that are available, that might be able to support you in other ways.
- We will provide you with more information about good hydration and nutrition, that is specific to your needs.
- We will provide you with regular and ongoing support to help you to stay well.
Your personal goals

If after reading this guide, you decide to make any changes to your diet to promote good health, please use this space to make a note of any personal goals. Even small goals can make a huge difference. Make sure they are realistic and achievable for you.

For example
1. I will have a nourishing milky coffee each day
2. I will have a snack between meals each day
3. I will choose more of the higher energy meals that HILS offer

Your personal goals

1. ..................................................................................................................................................................

2. ..................................................................................................................................................................

3. ..................................................................................................................................................................

This resource has been compiled using available current evidence and has been approved by a team of registered Dietitians and Nutritionists. This resource has also received external review and agreement from dietitians with an interest and actively working with older people, and by our Nutrition & Wellbeing Steering Group members.

Contact Details

For further information on HILS’ services including meals on wheels, please visit our website on www.hertsindependentliving.org or call us on 0330 2000 2013 (all calls charged at local rate).

Hertfordshire Independent Living Service is the operating name of Hertfordshire Community Meals Limited, a registered society number IP30206R under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014, registered with the Financial Conduct Authority and as a charity with HMRC registration number XT37228. HILS March 2017. Review due 2020.