

Cystic Fibrosis all about nutrition

Leaving home and eating well with cystic fibrosis

With thanks to members of the Cystic Fibrosis Dietitians Group (CFDGUK) for preparing the information in this leaflet.

Leaving home and eating well with cystic fibrosis

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Are you starting work, going off to university or just moving out of your family home? If so, you may have to plan meals and shop for food for the first time. If you are short on time and cooking skills, this leaflet will offer some tips to help maintain a high-calorie diet, which is vital for staying well-nourished and healthy. Many people with cystic fibrosis (CF) require more energy (calories) to maintain a healthy body weight. This is important for good lung function and helps your body fight off infection. To ensure you consume adequate calories, your dietitian may advise you to have full fat dairy products and include high-fat foods in your diet.

Boost your calories

Use regular recipes or ready meals and give yourself extra energy by adding:

- cheese, oil or butter to vegetables, pasta, pizza, potatoes and chilli.
- olive oils, oil-based dressings or mayonnaise to salads.
- cream to soups, cereal, yoghurts, pasta, milkshakes and hot chocolate.
- sour cream, crème fraiche, Greek yoghurt or creamed coconut to curries, chilli or stews.
- lots of butter, margarine, cream cheese and mayonnaise to wraps and sandwiches.

Power up with breakfast

Breakfast is fuel for your body! As well as cereal and toast try these suggestions:

- Granola with yoghurt, waffles, pancakes, or crumpets with syrup or chocolate spread.
- If you are in a rush you can grab something on the go like a bagel with cream cheese, peanut butter sandwich, Danish pastry, croissant with butter and jam, or a giant muffin.
- If you have more time try having scrambled eggs, cheese on toast or a bacon sandwich. If you're feeling adventurous try mashing an avocado on toast and top with bacon and egg.
- Simply cannot face breakfast? Try having a milkshake made with full-fat milk or yoghurt, and try to buy full-fat varieties eg Greek yoghurt.



Stay charged up all day

- **Don't skip meals** – this can make it difficult to meet your calorie needs and could lead to weight loss and a lack of energy.
- **Make drinks count** – include high-energy drinks like milkshakes, lattes, hot chocolate, fruit juices, fruit smoothies, iced coffees and whole milk.
- **Prepare a lunch box** – put one together in the evening if you're unlikely to have enough time in the morning. Keep a range of cheese, meat and salami slices for easy wrap or sandwich making.
- **Snack smart** – plan ahead for the day and stash snacks in backpacks, handbags, drawers, lockers or your car. Here are some ideas for high-energy snacks:
 - Nuts, trail mix, dried fruit, seeds and olives.
 - Cereal bars, raisin bread and cake bars.
 - Crisps and pretzels.
 - Biscuits and chocolate.
 - Peanut butter on crackers.
 - Packets of pasta, noodles, hot chocolate sachets or creamed soups in a mug.

Keep these snacks cool in an insulated lunch bag or fridge:

- Cheese - single serving triangles, peel-and-eat portions and cheese dips.
- Hummus and pitta bread or crackers.
- Whole milk yoghurt.

Stocking up – cupboard, fridge and freezer

After years of living at home, where cupboards are often well-stocked, it may be daunting when faced with an empty cupboard. Use these suggestions to ensure you have all the right supplies:

Store cupboard

- Meat and fish - corned beef, stew, curry, tuna and sardines.
- Vegetables - tomatoes, sweet corn, baked beans and kidney beans.
- Soups - condensed varieties can double up as sauces.
- Jars of ready-made sauces - pasta, curry or stir-fry sauces.
- Olive oil or sunflower oil for cooking and adding to salads and vegetables.
- Breakfast cereal, pasta, rice, noodles and instant mashed potato.
- Gravy granules and instant sauce mixes such as cheese.
- Seasonings and spices like salt, pepper, Italian seasoning, chilli and curry powder, or 'chicken in a bag' spices - just add chicken, potatoes and vegetables for an 'all in one' easy supper.
- Snacks - nuts, crisps, cereal bars, chocolate, dried fruit, biscuits and crackers.
- Sugar, jam, honey, peanut butter and chocolate spread.
- Puddings - sponge puddings, rice pudding, ready to serve custard, instant whip.
- Long-life milk, milkshake powder or syrup.



Fridge

Keep these items in the fridge to make sure they stay good for longer:

- Butter or vegetable spread.
- Cheese, cream cheese and cheese spread.
- Sliced meats such as ham, turkey, salami and chorizo.
- Sausage rolls, pork pies and pasties.
- Full-fat milk, full-fat yoghurt and cream.
- Mayonnaise, dressings and bottled sauces eg ketchup.
- Dips, eg hummus, sour cream, guacamole and taramasalata.
- Eggs.

Freezer

Store these items in the freezer to provide a good meal choice when you need it:

- Pizza, garlic bread, oven chips, potato waffles and hash browns.
- Breaded fish or chicken portions and fish fingers.
- Mince, sausages, beef burgers and bean burgers.
- Frozen vegetables, eg peas and mixed veg.
- Dairy ice cream.

Buy fresh fruit, salad, vegetables, meat and fish as and when you need it.

Budget tips

Learn how to cook – Cooking is a great skill to have, not only will you save money but it is a great way to impress potential house mates or friends. If you're not confident of your cooking skills try to get some practice in before you leave home. Ask your parents to show you how to cook your favourite meals and treat them to a weekly cooked meal, or try using YouTube videos to master the basics. Learning how to roast a chicken is a great basic. A whole chicken is good value and it can be used in multiple ways throughout the week, eg in sandwiches, wraps, pasta, risottos or in a tasty curry.

Use a shopping list – Keep a running shopping list on your phone or note pad, look out for supermarket value brands and offers and try to bulk buy whenever you can, particularly with non-perishables.

Love your leftovers – Think of it as a meal you don't have to prepare. Cook two to four portions at a time, and anything you're not going to eat in the next two days, freeze for later. Good things to freeze are chilli, spaghetti bolognaise, curries, pasta bakes and stews. Keep a range of plastic bags and boxes to store individual portions that you can freeze, defrost and reheat in the microwave.

Share the cost – If you live in a shared house, suggest sharing the cost of a taxi from the supermarket or the cost of a supermarket delivery.



Don't forget your enzymes

Make sure you have a supply on you at all times – you never know when hunger might strike:

- Have an emergency supply in a locker, bag or desk.
- If you use a lunch box try putting your enzymes in this so you don't forget them.
- Think about what you will say to fellow students or colleagues who may ask what you are taking. If you don't want to mention your CF just yet, you could just say: "my doctor said to try them to help digest my food".

Storing your enzymes and other medication

Make sure you have a good stock of your enzymes and other medication and store it in a cool, dry place such as a cupboard. Some medication may need to be kept in the fridge

If you are moving away from your home town where your GP and pharmacy are located, make sure you take a good supply of your enzymes and medication with you. A GP should be able to send a prescription electronically to any pharmacy in the UK. This might be an option for you if you want a repeat prescription, but it may be helpful to register with a GP near your new home if you don't think you could easily travel back to your previous GP surgery if you get ill.

Enjoy your new food freedom and speak to your dietitian if you have any questions or need a few more ideas to help you eat well.



Cystic Fibrosis Trust

This leaflet has been designed to be given out by a CF dietitian, along with their advice. If you downloaded or requested it directly from the Cystic Fibrosis Trust we would advise you to discuss this information with your CF dietitian.

The information in this leaflet is based on clinical best practice and a consensus of opinion by dietitians within the CFDGUK. For detailed guidance on CF nutrition, please see the 'Consensus document on nutritional management of cystic fibrosis', published September 2016. View our consensus documents here cysticfibrosis.org.uk/publications.

The Cystic Fibrosis Trust provides information about cystic fibrosis through our factsheets, leaflets and other publications. Most of our publications can be downloaded from our website cysticfibrosis.org.uk/publications or ordered from our helpline.

Our helpline can help you with a range of issues, no matter how big or small. Our trained staff can provide a listening ear, practical advice, welfare/benefits information or direct you to other sources of support. The helpline is open Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm, and can be contacted on 0300 373 1000 or at helpline@cysticfibrosis.org.uk.