



AGED CARE

NUTRITION SUPPLEMENTS

When a resident's appetite is poor and they are not able to take in sufficient nutrition to meet requirements, they are at risk of losing a lot of weight.

Weight loss will result in:

- Weakness, fatigue
- Poor wound healing
- Increased infections
- Decreased resistance
- Increased side effects from medical treatment
- Decreased quality of life

Maintaining good nutrition can help the person to:

- Feel better
- Have more energy
- Fight infection
- Prevent or reverse weight loss
- Reduce severity of side effects from medical treatments
- Recover more quickly

Strategies to help to prevent weight loss include:

- Small frequent meals
- Nourishing fluids e.g. milkshakes, iced coffees, fruit smoothies etc.
- Add extra protein and energy to food e.g. margarine, cream, grated cheese, milk powder
- Limit low energy foods e.g. tea, coffee, salad
- Take a multi vitamin and mineral supplement

When these strategies are not enough, or an extra boost of nutrition is needed, then commercial supplements can be used. There are a variety of supplements available. For more information, discuss with your dietitian.

Standard Oral Supplements

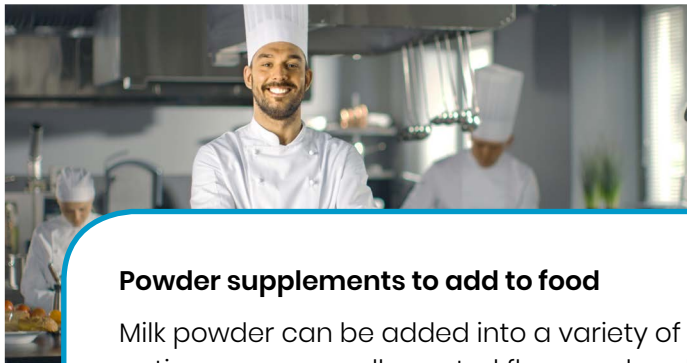
These are suitable for people who are able to take some oral intake, but who are struggling to achieve adequate nutrition. They are best taken at snack times to give a boost to nutritional intake. Some of them can replace normal food and fluid if enough is taken.

Remember that nourishing fluids that are made in a care home also provide good nutrition and can be cheaper. Use these supplements as a base and add extra milk powder, ice-cream, fruit, flavouring, cream, etc. to increase variety. See the respective websites for more information re how to use these products.

Powder supplements

Standard commercial powdered supplements are intended to be made into a flavoured milk drink. They are supplemented with vitamins and minerals, with some providing a complete nutritional drink if sufficient is taken.

Some, but not all are lactose free.



Powder supplements to add to food

Milk powder can be added into a variety of foods to boost protein and energy. Other commercial options are generally neutral flavoured and have some added vitamins and minerals to boost intake. They are not complete nutritional supplements.

Liquid supplements

There are a variety of liquid supplements that can also be purchased. Most of them are very similar to the ones mentioned above but in a liquid form. Some of them are more concentrated and provide more nutrition in a smaller volume.

They can generally provide a complete nutritional intake when taken in sufficient quantities and are usually lactose free.

Fruit Purees with Protein

These usually have milk powder and some vitamins and minerals added. They are useful for those who do not like to drink milk.

Puddings

The puddings are another alternative for those who don't like milky drinks but who are happy to take custards and milky desserts.

Cookies

High protein biscuits provide another option for those who not like to drink milk.

Med Pass Program

Most care homes will utilise a med pass program whereby a 2 calorie per ml formula is administered on the medication trolley 3 or 4 times per day e.g. 60ml qid or 80ml tds. The advantage of this approach is that the supplement is seen as a medication, is offered in much smaller amounts and is more readily accepted.

Clear liquid supplements

These are suitable for people who don't like milk drinks. They are supplemented with protein and vitamins, but are more like a fruit juice drink. They can tend to be quite sweet but still provide more nutrition than water or cordial even if they are diluted to taste.

Supplements for Diabetes

Some supplements have been developed specifically for diabetes. They may not always be necessary as most supplements have minimal effect on blood sugars because they are taken instead of other food. However, if blood sugars are high on the standard supplements, then these may be worth a try.

Wound supplements

Requirements for protein and some vitamins and minerals are higher when a wound or pressure ulcer is present. Arginine, an amino acid found in all proteins is also needed for healing.

Be sure to check the recommended amount to achieve the desired amount of arginine.



Supplements prior to Surgery

The surgeon or dietitian may a specific supplement prior to surgery to enhance recovery.

Protein and Energy Boosters

These products can help to boost protein or energy intake. They should be used in conjunction with advice from a dietitian.

a) Glucose Polymers

These products are similar to a glucose powder that doesn't taste sweet. They can be added to both sweet and savoury foods to boost energy intake. They are not suitable for people with diabetes.

b) Protein powders

The protein powders can be helpful if the resident eats little meat or other protein foods. They should be used with caution if kidney or liver disease are present. Skim milk powder may be a cheaper alternative for some.

c) Protein and fat

Some supplements provide a pure fat source or a combination of fat and protein. These can be useful in defined amounts to boost intake.

Specialised Supplements

Many other supplements are available from the supplement companies shown below e.g. specially formulated for people with lung disease, kidney problems etc. These products are best used only when a dietitian has been consulted and the person has been individually assessed.

Supplement Company Websites:

Abbott	https://nutrition.abbott/au/nutritional-drinks
Flavour Creations	https://www.flavourcreations.com.au/
Nestle	https://www.nestlehealthscience.com.au/brands/resource
Nestle Sustagen	https://www.sustagen.com.au/recipes
Nutricia	http://nutriciamedical.com.au/product-category/adult-nutrition/