

Making the most of your supplement drinks

Supplement drinks are designed for people who are unwell and need extra nutrition. They contain protein and calories and some have additional vitamins and minerals.

When you are unwell or recovering from injury or an operation, your body needs extra nutrition. It is best to meet your nutritional needs through your normal diet. However if you are unable to do this, these drinks can provide that extra nourishment. They are also useful if you have difficulty chewing or swallowing.

You may only require supplement drinks whilst you are unwell, finding it difficult to gain weight or struggling to eat ordinary food. Your dietitian or the person who organised them for you will let you know how long you should take them for.

What do they contain?

Most supplement drinks are either milk or fruit juice based. Some come as a powder to be made into a drink.

They contain extra calories and protein to help supplement your dietary intake plus a range of vitamins and minerals.

Ingredients vary so check the label or ask your dietitian or GP if you need more information.

How do I get them?

Your doctor can prescribe supplements if you need them.

Usually you will receive a small supply to start with to see if you like them. Following this, you will receive one month's supply at a time.

This will be reviewed regularly to check you still need them.



What if I have diabetes?

Supplement drinks are still ok if you have diabetes. The milk-based drinks are better. Sip slowly, taking 20 minutes or more per bottle. If you cannot tolerate milk, discuss alternatives with your dietitian or doctor.

Nutritional content of some prescribed supplements	Volume (ml)	Energy (kcal)	Protein (g)	Free From
Aymes Shake made with 200ml full fat milk	237	388	16	GF
Foodlink Complete made with 200ml full fat milk	237	383	18	GF
Complan Shake made with 200ml full fat milk	237	380	16	GF
Fortisip Compact	125	300	12	GF
Ensure Compact	125	300	13	GF
Fresubin Energy	200	300	11	GF, LF
Fresubin 2kcal	200	400	20	GF, LF
Fortisip Compact Protein	125	300	18	GF
Ensure Plus Juce	220	300	11	GF,LF
Fortijuce	200	300	8	GF, LF
Nutricreme	125	225	12	GF,LF
Forticreme complete	125	200	12	GF

GF = gluten free LF = lactose free (below threshold)

If you want to know more about “free from” status or suitability for specific diets please ask.

How and when do I take them?

- Supplement drinks are best taken **between** or **after** meals. They are not intended to replace meals. They can act as a “top-up” to help increase your energy and protein intake.
- Your doctor or dietitian can advise on how many you need daily and the best time to take them.
- If you have been advised to thicken the fluids you drink, you will need to thicken your supplement drinks to the correct consistency. Check with your speech and language therapist or dietitian if you need further information.
- Some sweet flavours are best served chilled. They can also be frozen to make ice cream.
- They can be served warm or added to a warm drink e.g. hot chocolate. Do not boil.
- Fruit juice style drinks can be frozen into ice cubes or lollies. They can also be diluted e.g. with lemonade. However this will increase the volume you need to drink.
- Neutral flavours can be used instead of milk to make e.g. porridge, milk puddings, custard and rice puddings, sweet or savoury sauces and added to hot drinks.
- You will find some recipe ideas on the next page.
- If you are not keen on the supplement you have been prescribed, tell the person who prescribed it. You might prefer a different flavour or a different style of drink.

Recipe ideas

Strawberry ice cream (Serves 1)

Take one bottle of strawberry milk-based supplement, add 15ml strawberry sauce and freeze for 4 hours. Allow to stand for 2-3 minutes. Mix in 50g chopped strawberries. Serve. Try different flavours for variety.



Fruit jelly (Serves 4)

Cut 1 packet of jelly into cubes, place in a bowl, add 100 ml boiling water, 3 bottles of your supplement drink and a handful of mixed berries or tinned fruit. Leave in fridge to set before serving.

Rice pudding (Serves 1)

Mix 75ml full fat milk, 5g butter, 10g sugar and 25g pudding rice in an ovenproof dish. Bake for 35 mins at 170°C (gas mark 3.) Take out and stir in 1 bottle of milk-based supplement drink. Cover and put back in the oven for 45 minutes at 160°C (gas mark 2), taking care not to boil dry. Add sultanas, sugar or jam to serve.



Cocktail (serves 1)

Mix half a can of full sugar fizzy pop (cola or lemonade) into fruit juice based supplement e.g. Fortijuce, Ensure Plus Juce. Drink chilled.

What happens when I stop taking them?

Supplement drinks can normally be stopped once you are eating and drinking enough. You should speak to your dietitian or doctor before stopping them.

Here are some tips for extra energy and protein once you've stopped taking supplements.

- Drink extra milk or add more milk into drinks.
- See our leaflet **“Nourishing drinks for adults”** * for ideas including milkshakes, smoothies, malted milk drinks and hot chocolate.
- Some supplement drinks are available to buy if you wish to continue taking similar drinks. Try “Complan” or “Meritene Energis” nutrition drinks.

You can buy these at your local supermarket or chemist.

They are available in milkshake and soup styles in a range of flavours. Mix the milkshakes with full fat milk and mix the soups with water as directed on the packet.



- See our leaflets **“Eating Well with a Small Appetite”** and **“High Energy High Protein Diet Shopping list ideas”** for ideas on a “little and often” approach to eating, enriching your meals and nourishing snacks between meals.

Nutritional information of some non-prescribed drinks	Volume (ml)	Energy (kcal)	Protein (g)
Complan Shake made with 200ml full fat milk	237	387	16
Fortified full fat milk (with 3 tblsp skimmed milk powder)	200	192	12.5
Full fat milk	200	136	7
Semi-skimmed milk	200	94	7
Skimmed milk	200	70	7
Soya milk (original)	200	70	7
Hot chocolate made with full fat milk	200	203	6
Horlicks or Ovaltine with full fat milk	200	228	7-8
“Nourishing Drinks” milkshake: Fruit Refresher *	280	330	12
“Nourishing Drinks” milkshake: Coffee Calypso *	240	380	14

How do I store them?

- Store in a cool, dry place, away from heat. They do not need to be refrigerated – simply chill a small amount at a time if you prefer them cold.
- Once opened, close the bottle and store in a fridge for a maximum of 24 hours.
- Check the use-by date before drinking.

Contact information

For further information contact the person who gave you this leaflet or:

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The Trust's Patient Information Service is here to help you to find out more about health condition, local support groups and healthy living

The Patient Information Service is at Airedale General Hospital
Tel: 01535 294413 Email: your.health@anhst.nhs.uk
Web: www.airedale-trust.nhs.uk/YourHealth

If you require this leaflet in other languages or formats please telephone the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on **01535 294019**

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