

NUTRITION SUPPORT ON A BUDGET

It is important that healthcare professionals (HCPs) consider their patient's financial situation when offering dietary advice and support. This factsheet provides practical suggestions to help you help patients who may be experiencing financial difficulties.

Food insecurity in the UK

Food insecurity is when a person has insufficient resources to ensure access to nutritionally adequate food and it is a known risk factor for malnutrition (1). A recent report (2018) by the Food and Agriculture Organisation estimated that 2.2 million people in the UK are severely food insecure (2).

Since the coronavirus pandemic, one in four adults in the UK are thought to have experienced food insecurity (3). The Trussell Trust issued 1.2 million emergency food parcels within the first six months of the pandemic (4), and over half (52%) of their service users had not used a food bank before (5).

**1 IN 4 ADULTS HAVE
EXPERIENCED FOOD
INSECURITY (3)**

Food first approach on a budget

Ideas for snacks and puddings

- Rice pudding with jam
- Tinned sponge with tinned/powdered custard
- Scones/biscuits/cakes/mini pancakes
- Yoghurt or ice cream with frozen/tinned fruit or jelly
- Crisps or crackers with cheese
- Finger foods such as sausage rolls/cocktail sausages



Ideas for nourishing drinks

- Fresh or long-life milk (choose whole milk)
- Fortified milk (made with milk powder)
- Fruit juice/smoothies/squash/cordials
- Hot chocolate (made with drinking chocolate and fresh or long-life milk)
- Malted milk drinks



Ideas for fortifying foods

- Adding milk powder to milky drinks and dishes (e.g. rice pudding)
- Using tinned beans and pulses in sauces, soups and stews
- Adding cream or ice cream to frozen fruits and puddings
- Adding oils, fats and condiments (e.g. butter, margarine or mayonnaise) to sandwiches and cooked dishes such as mashed potato/scrambled eggs
- Adding sugar, jam or honey to drinks, porridge, toast or puddings



Top tips for eating well on a budget

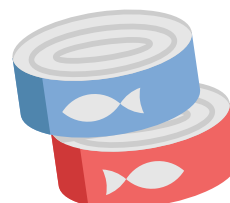
When encouraging a food first approach, it is useful to consider a patient's financial situation. Here are some general tips for more cost-effective meal planning:



Fresh isn't always best

Frozen, canned, juiced and dried fruits and vegetables all count towards the 5-a-day goal.

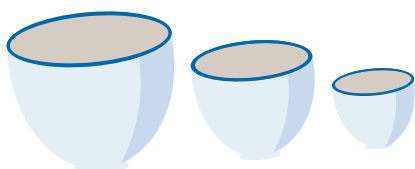
In fact, frozen foods can be more nutritious as they are frozen at the point of picking, conserving their important micronutrients.



Prepare ahead

Plan out meals and snacks in advance. Sticking to a weekly food plan can help to keep the costs down when food shopping.

It can be useful to keep a store of basic foods such as long-life milk, tinned meat/fish, hot chocolate powder etc.



Be portion savvy

Some foods are cheaper per gram when they can be bought in larger quantities (e.g. cheese, pasta and rice).



Cook smart

Try to cook in bulk, freezing portions for other meals. Make sure leftovers are put to good use too!

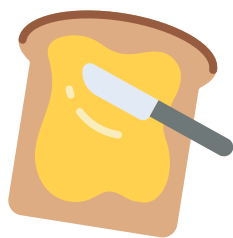
Shop smart

Lookout for products with a reduced-price sticker (make sure food is consumed or frozen before the use-by date).

Try to shop seasonally and remember to buy own brands for cheaper options too. To avoid food waste, choose foods which don't require refrigeration (such as beans, pulses, milk powder, jam, tinned fruit, biscuits, cakes and crisps).



Putting it all together



Breakfast

DAY 1: Porridge (made with whole milk and sugar) & ½ tin of fruit

DAY 2: 2 slices of toast with peanut butter and sliced banana & glass of full fat milk

DAY 3: Porridge (made with whole milk and sugar) & ½ tin of fruit

Lunch

DAY 1: Small tin of baked beans (own brand), toast with grated cheese

DAY 2: Tuna, sweetcorn and mayo sandwich

DAY 3: Cheese on toast



Dinner

DAY 1: Savoury mince and mashed potatoes (made with butter and whole milk) and frozen peas & ½ tin custard with banana

DAY 2: Jacket potato with leftover savoury mince and grated cheese & ½ tin rice pudding with jam

DAY 3: Tuna pasta bake (tuna, mayo, pasta, onion, frozen peas, grated cheese) & ½ tin custard with banana

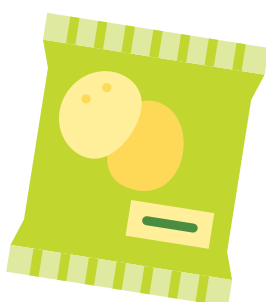


Snacks

DAY 1: Own-brand biscuit x 2 and glass of full fat milk & packet of crisps (from multipack)

DAY 2: Slice of pre-made cake (e.g. madeira) & packet of crisps (from multipack)

DAY 3: Own-brand biscuit x 2 and glass of full fat milk & slice of pre-made cake (e.g., madeira)



PROVIDES AT
LEAST 2000KCAL
& OVER 60G OF
PROTEIN/DAY

SHOPPING LIST

Porridge Oats (500g)	75p
Whole Milk (1 Pint/ Long Life Carton)	55p
Sugar (1kg)	65p
400g Can Fruit	47p
410g Baked Beans	22p
Bread (800g)	59p
Margarine (500g)	69p
Cheese (250g)	1.49
Beef Mince (250g)	1.49
Potato (4 Large)	39p
Frozen Vegetables (1kg)	69p
400g Carton Custard	42p
Biscuits (Packet Custard Creams)	28p
Multipack Own Brand Crisps X6	55p
Peanut Butter	85p
Jam	28p
Can Tuna (125g)	59p
Can Sweetcorn	37p
Mayonnaise	59p
400g Tin Rice Pudding	40p
Madeira Cake	85p
Pasta 500g (Penne)	29p
Onions (3pk)	49p
Bananas (6pk)	75p

TOTAL: 14.69

COMES TO
UNDER £15
(BASED ON ALDI
COSTS)

Providing your patients with additional support

Patients who are in financial need can be referred to a Trussel Trust food bank for a three-day emergency food package.

Referrals to food banks can be made by different frontline professionals such as HCPs and social workers. More commonly, vouchers are accessed through Citizens Advice. Appointments can be made with a Citizen's Advice advisor, who will conduct a needs assessment. If eligible, a voucher is issued. This can then be exchanged for a food package at a local food bank.

Some independent food banks, community fridges, or council-run groups can be accessed without a referral.

There are plenty of free online resources providing information on eating well on a budget. Examples include:

- Jack Monroe: Cooking on a Bootstrap
- BBC Good Food Budget Recipes
- Most of the major supermarkets, including ASDA's one-pound meals



References

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