

Oral nutrition supplements

Āpitiḡanga toioranga ā-waha

If you are underweight and struggling to put weight back on by eating normally, your general practice team or dietitian may suggest you have oral nutrition supplement drinks. You have the drinks on top of what you normally eat and drink.

These drinks are rich in the nutrients you need and will help you to have more calories. They are available as powders that you mix with water or milk, or as fluids that are ready to drink.



Types of powdered drink products

Several types of powdered drinks are available, and they come in different flavours. You can buy some at the supermarket and pharmacy (Complan, Vitaplan). You can get others (Ensure, Sustagen Hospital Formula) on prescription from your general practice team or dietitian. Talk to your general practice team or dietitian about what is best for you.

You can mix the powder with water or milk. Milk, especially dark-blue-top milk (whole milk), will give you more protein and calories. It is best to have the drink between meals, so you do not become too full at mealtimes.

Mixing instructions

- 1) Quarter-fill a large glass or mug with milk or water.
- 2) Use the scoop provided to measure the right amount of powder. This should either be what is written on the packaging, or what your general practice team or dietitian recommends.
- 3) Mix with a fork or small whisk until the powder dissolves and the drink is smooth. You can use a shaker or stick blender if you want.
- 4) Top up with milk or water, stirring continuously.

Once the drink is mixed, you can have it straight away. You should cover any leftover drink and put it in the fridge and then use it within 24 hours.



Ideas for using powdered drink products

- Add other flavours, such as milkshake flavouring, Milo, instant coffee or drinking chocolate.
- Make a thickshake by adding 2 tsp of instant pudding powder.
- Make a hot drink by heating it gently – but do not boil it.
- Make a fruit smoothie by blending the made-up mixture with:
 - 1 banana and 2 to 3 tablespoons of ice cream or yoghurt
 - ¼ cup of canned fruit and 2 to 3 tablespoons of ice cream or yoghurt
 - ½ cup of frozen berries.

Types of ready-to-drink products

Several types of ready-to-drink products are available, and they come in different flavours. You can buy them at a pharmacy.

You can buy some products (such as Fortijuice) directly from Nutricia (the supplier) online or by phoning **0800-255-025** (option 2).

Some products (such as Ensure Plus and Fortisip) may be available on prescription from your general practice team or dietitian.

Talk to your general practice team or dietitian about what is best for you.

Written by HealthInfo clinical advisers. Last reviewed February 2022.