

# Living with Lung Cancer

## *Practical Tips for Using Oral Nutritional Supplements*

Eating a balanced diet is essential for your overall health. Some of the symptoms associated with your lung cancer and its treatment may affect your ability to eat. Your dietitian/healthcare professional may feel that you need extra nutrition to meet your energy and nutrient needs, and you may be prescribed oral nutritional supplements. Oral nutritional supplements are often high in energy (calories), contain protein, fat and a full range of vitamins and minerals. The oral nutritional supplements may help increase your overall nutrient intake which can help you to manage your lung cancer and its treatment. There is a range of oral nutritional supplements available so speak to your dietitian/other healthcare professional about the variety of styles and flavours e.g. small volume, high protein, milkshake, juices, soups, puddings and yogurts. This leaflet provides some practical help and advice about taking your oral nutritional supplements.

### When do I take my oral nutritional supplement?

Your healthcare professional will have explained how many oral nutritional supplements you should take each day, normally 2-3 bottles a day. Do not forget to shake the bottle well before opening it and check the use by date. The following should help you decide when to take it:

- Oral nutritional supplements can be taken at any time e.g. between meals, as a snack, first thing on a morning or before bed time
- Take the supplement in small amounts regularly throughout the day. Some oral nutritional supplements are available in a concentrated format and in a small volume which is useful if you find drinking large volumes too difficult, or your appetite is small or even non-existent

Produced in conjunction with



## How do I take my oral nutritional supplement?

There are many different ways to take your oral nutritional supplements. Try some of the following:

- Most oral nutritional supplements are best served chilled. But the soup and savoury style are best served warm but not boiled
- Drink juice or yogurt-style drinks from the bottle using a straw
- Pour it into a glass or cup
- You can mix them into foods or drinks e.g. replace the milk in sauces, desserts, drinks and on cereals
- There are often recipe books available from the companies that produce oral nutritional supplements – ask your healthcare professional how you can get one
- If oral nutritional supplements are prescribed, these are usually best taken in between meals and before bed

## Can I heat or freeze my oral nutritional supplement?

When you change the temperature of your oral nutritional supplement the following is recommended:

- If you want to heat your oral nutritional supplement e.g. to incorporate certain flavours into soups, hot drinks or custard – put it into a pan and warm gently. Do not boil it otherwise the taste may change and the vitamins in the supplement may be damaged or destroyed
- If you want to freeze your oral nutritional supplement – first put it into a freezer safe container, ice cube tray or even ice lolly moulds. The juice style supplements are best for freezing

## How do I store my oral nutritional supplement?

If your oral nutritional supplement is unopened it can be stored in a dry, cool place e.g. a cupboard. Once opened, drink the contents within four hours or store in the refrigerator but check the instructions on the pack to see how long they can be stored.

## Help and support are there for you

Discuss any problems or worries you have with your healthcare professional; they will be able to provide you with help and advice. They will also be able to provide information about local organisations that can support you.

For further information about Nutrition in Cancer visit [www.nutritionincancer.co.uk](http://www.nutritionincancer.co.uk)

Further support is available from the following associations:

**Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation**

**0333 323 7200**

**[www.roycastle.org](http://www.roycastle.org)**

**Macmillan Cancer Support**

**0808 808 00 00**

**[www.macmillan.org.uk](http://www.macmillan.org.uk)**