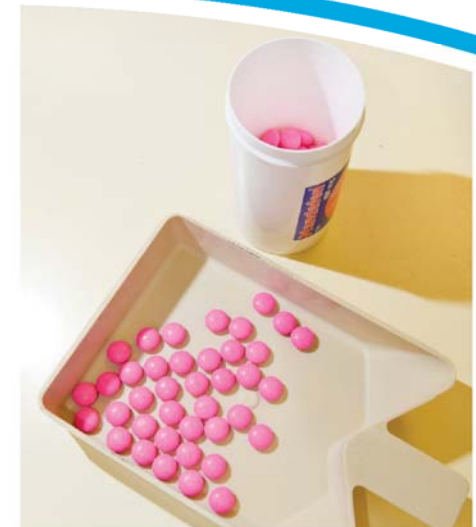
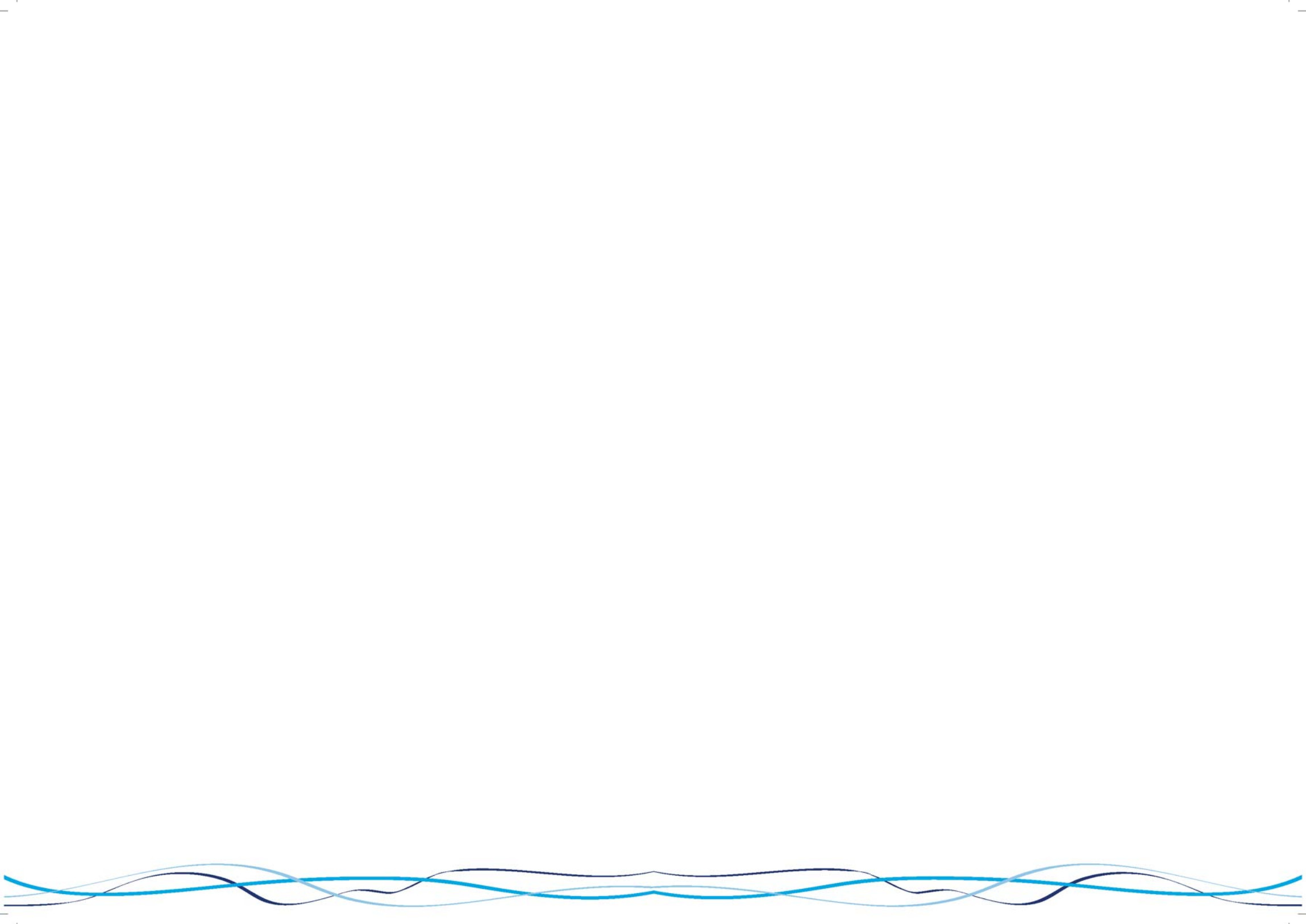


# Weight Gain and Medicine used in Mental Health

Information for Patients, Family and Friends

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## Useful Websites:

[www.communityfoodandhealth.org](http://www.communityfoodandhealth.org)

[www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthydiet](http://www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthydiet)

[www.eatwellscotland.org](http://www.eatwellscotland.org)

[www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts](http://www.bda.uk.com/foodfacts)

[www.5aday.nhs.uk](http://www.5aday.nhs.uk)

[www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

[www.bbc.co.uk/healthyliving\\_living/nutrition](http://www.bbc.co.uk/healthyliving_living/nutrition)

[www.activescotland.org.uk](http://www.activescotland.org.uk)

[www.takelifeon.co.uk](http://www.takelifeon.co.uk)

[www.pathstohealth.org.uk](http://www.pathstohealth.org.uk)

We are happy to consider requests for this publication in other languages or formats such as large print.

## About Medicine and Weight Gain

Medicines are used for a variety of reasons. Taking medication as prescribed can help you feel better and enjoy life to the full. Unfortunately for some reason, a possible side effect of medication can be unwanted weight gain.

### Medicines may increase your weight by:

- Causing cravings for sweet foods especially chocolate
- Stopping you feeling full even after a large meal
- Causing tiredness and stiffness - which may make you less active
- Making you feel calmer and more relaxed - which may mean you use less calories
- Causing dry mouth and thirst - which may mean you increase your intake of high calorie drinks
- Causing increased appetite

**Do not stop taking your medicine;  
you may risk a relapse of illness**

Not everyone will gain weight. A healthy diet and an active lifestyle will have lasting benefits for both physical and mental health whatever your weight.

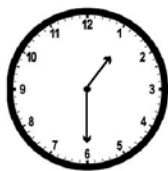
## Increased Appetite

If you notice an increase in appetite or you crave sweet foods...

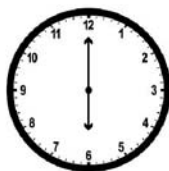
- Eat at regular times in the day and do not skip meals or snacks. If you go too long without food your blood sugar will dip and make your cravings worse. Eating something every 3-4 hours help.



Breakfast by 9.00am



Lunch by 1.30pm



Evening meal by 6.00pm

## Remember to drink water or diluting juice in-between meals.

- Eat more fruit and vegetables. Eat plenty of vegetables and salads with meals and have fruit as snacks.
- Write down what you eat and drink for a few days - this will make you more aware of when you are eating or drinking, how much you are having and the types of foods and drinks you are choosing.
- Try to cut back on foods and drinks that are high in fats and/or sugars such as fried foods, pastries, crisps, takeaways, sweets, chocolates, cakes and biscuits. See page 7 for some ideas.



## Activity

The more active you are, the more calories you burn and the less likely you will feel like eating.

Look for ways to increase activity in your daily routine.

- Walking is the simplest and cheapest of all exercise. You can greatly increase your fitness by walking faster and longer. Many areas have walking groups you may wish to join.
- Brisk housework and gardening keeps you fit too.
- Even small changes such as taking the stairs will help.
- Not using a lift or getting off the bus one or two stops earlier.

Here are some calorie burning activities.

Activity	Time to burn 100 Calories
Leisurely Walk	34 mins
Hoover, Dust, Polish	29 mins
Relaxed Cycle	24 mins
Walk the Dog	24 mins
Fast Walk	18 mins
Dig the Garden	16 mins
Swim Slow Lengths	16 mins
Rearrange the Furniture	14 mins
Climb Stairs	12 mins



## Drinks

If you have a dry mouth or feel thirsty... drink plenty of tap water. Aim for 6 - 8 tall glasses every day.

Drink enough water helps:

- You feel more alert and energetic.
- You concentrate and think more clearly.
- Improve the condition of your skin and hair.

Your body flush out any unwanted toxins.



Add a splash of flavour if you don't like plain water, try:

- Adding a slice of lemon or lime.
- Adding a splash of low sugar diluting juice.
- Herbal, peppermint or fruit tea.

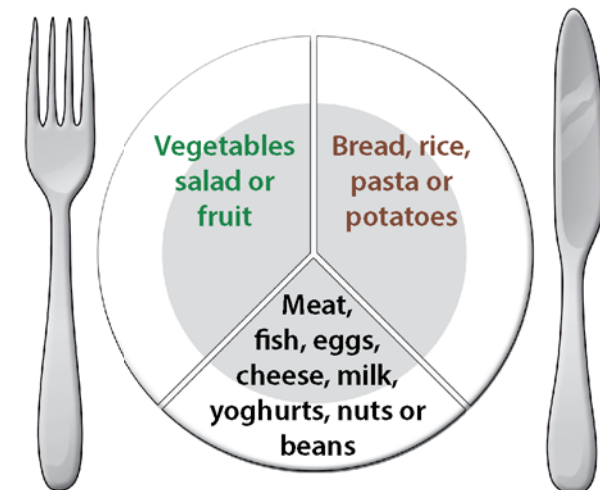
Fill a jug with tap water and keep in the fridge. Icy cold water is so refreshing.

- Caffeine is in tea, coffee, energy drinks and some fizzy drinks like cola and iron brew. Too much caffeine can make you thirsty, wakeful and anxious.
- Fizzy drinks, full fat milk and fruit juice are high in calories so should not be used to quench your thirst. Use semi-skimmed or skimmed milk in drinks, cereals etc.
- Try chewing sugar free gum or sugar free sweets, sucking on ice cubes or eating low sugar ice lollies.

- Make sure that you are taking enough fluids - water, no added sugar drinks including flavoured waters, tea and coffee (de-caff best) or fruit teas.
- It is important to eat balanced meals. A balanced meal is based on starchy carbohydrate (bread, breakfast cereal, rice, pasta etc.), plenty of vegetables, salad and fruit, and a small portion of protein (meat, milk, fish, cheese, nuts or beans).

Keep busy. Eating is sometimes a habit or just something to do. Try doing something active or interesting instead. For example: knitting, join classes, painting, or photography, Wii Fit, exercise DVD, sewing crossword or wordsearch.

The meal on your plate should look something like this:



## Sample menu showing regular balanced eating

### Breakfast

1 portion cereal (e.g. 2 Weetabix, 1 mug Bran Flakes) with semi-skimmed milk **OR**

1 large or 2 small slices bread/toast (wholemeal is best) or 1 roll with scraping of butter/spread and small teaspoon jam, marmalade.

1 piece fruit or a yoghurt.

### Mid Morning

A drink and if necessary a snack (see list on page 5).

### Lunch

Vegetable soup

2 slices bread (wholemeal is best) sandwich/1 roll/1 pitta/ 1 wrap with 1 slice meat / cheese, or tuna (no mayonnaise) and salad.

1 piece fruit or a low fat yoghurt.

### Mid Afternoon

A drink and if necessary a snack (see list on page 5).

### Evening Meal

Meat / chicken / fish etc. vegetables and potatoes. (See plate diagram on page 5)

1 piece fruit or a low fat yoghurt.

### Supper

A drink and if necessary a snack (see list on page 7).

This is only a sample and portions can be increased if you are very active or reduced if you are not active.

**HINT: Do not be tempted to have "seconds" - freeze any leftovers for another day.**

## Healthy Snacks

Before choosing a snack, have a glass of water as sometimes the "hunger message" is wrong and you are thirsty and not really hungry. Ideas for healthy snacks include.....

- Fruit (including dried and tinned - in juice not syrup), low fat yoghurt or fromage frais.
- A slice of toast, small crusty roll (wholemeal is best), small pancake, fruit scone, or non sugar breakfast cereal, or low calorie cereal bar (under 100 kcals per bar).
- Breadsticks, lower fat crisps such as Skips and Snack-a-Jacks or baked crisps.
- Vegetable soup - why not try making your own?
- Veggie sticks, cherry tomatoes, picked onions, gherkins etc can make a tasty snack. Try them with salsa or low calorie dips.