



Some conditions can make people feel breathless, which may impact their eating and drinking. Here are some simple steps that can help with eating and drinking when feeling breathless.

Choose softer, moist foods

Softer foods are often easier to chew and swallow. Adding moisture, chopping food into bite-sized pieces, mashing, mincing or liquidising foods, may help make food more manageable.

Examples include:

- Removing crusts from bread, add butter or margarine with soft toppings like meat or fish paste, mashed banana, mayonnaise-based spreads, and smooth peanut butter.
- Adding yoghurt, custard, or sauces to puddings
- Adding gravy or sauces to main meals
- Choosing stews, soups, and casseroles



Try smaller meals and snacks

Smaller meals with frequent snacks (for example, three small meals and three snacks daily) may be easier to manage. It is important for people to eat foods that they enjoy, at times of the day when they are feeling hungry. This may be outside of normal mealtimes.

Provide more nourishing liquids

Drinking can often be easier when breathless, so nourishing drinks can be a great option to prevent weight loss and keep hydrated.



Taking time to eat

Allow time to eat in relaxed and comfortable surroundings with no distractions. To keep food warm, serve half a meal at a time whilst keeping some in the oven. Heated mats, or heated plates could also be used. Cold options like finger foods, sandwiches, fruit, or cheese cubes can be eaten at leisure. **Every extra mouthful helps, so be positive about food intake!**

Posture

Sit upright when eating. If sat at a table, sit close to the edge and if needed add a cushion behind the back for support. After eating, relaxing for a little while before lying down or moving around, can help with feelings of breathlessness.



Dry mouth

Breathlessness can lead to a dry mouth which might impact on eating and drinking. Ice lollies, frozen fruit and keeping hydrated by drinking often can all help with the symptoms of a dry mouth.

You can find more information on the **Hertfordshire Care Provider's Association website** (<https://www.hcpa.info/>) or the **Hertfordshire Independent Living Service website** (<https://hertsindependentliving.org/>).