To all who are in isolation during COVID-19

A helpful isolation pack to support you during your isolation period

I cannot start to imagine how it must feel for you at the moment and so my team and I have put together an information pack to help you navigate this very tricky period.

The key thing to remember is that you are not alone and there are many of us wanting to help and support you.

The pack, which I hope you will find helpful, contains the following:

- **A Home Environment Checklist**
  This tool takes you through, in a structured way, some things that you may or may not have thought of in terms of staying safe at home.

- **Useful contact details**
  A useful list to put on your fridge or near your telephone as it contains some important contact details you might need to call during this period of isolation.

- **Tips to keep in mind if you are diabetic.**

- **Tips and hints about eating** the right things and not getting into bad habits while you are in isolation.

I really hope that this pack will be helpful to you. Please use the email address above if you have any further questions about this pack.

Yours faithfully

Dr Karen Eastman
**Lead for Unwarranted Clinical Variation**
On behalf of the Sussex Health and Care Partnership
Patient Home Environment Checklist

Make your home ‘falls-free’

Protect your independence by reducing the chance of falling
Each year, thousands of older people fall at home. Many of them are seriously injured and some are disabled. Falls are often due to hazards that are easy to overlook but easy to fix.

This checklist asks you about hazards found in your home. For each hazard the checklist tells you how to fix them.
Floors

Look at the floor in each room

☐ When you walk through a room, do you have to walk around furniture?

Ask someone to move the furniture so that both your path and your access is clear to opening/closing curtains and windows.

☐ Do you have rugs or mats on the floor or are your carpets frayed, wrinkled or have curled edges?

Remove the rugs on the floor or use double-sided tape or a non-slip backing so that the rugs won’t slip. Consider whether they need to be replaced or can be “stretched” by professionals.

☐ Are there papers, books, towels, shoes, magazines, boxes, blankets or any other similar objects on the floor?

Pick up things that are on the floor. Pack them away so that they don’t fall onto the floor again.

☐ Do you have to walk over or around wires or cords, e.g. wires/cords for lamps, telephones, or extension cords?

Secure (coil or tape) cords and wires next to the wall so that you can’t trip over them. Try to organise things so that your appliances are close to a socket. Do not run cables across a room.

☐ Do you clean up spills immediately?

If you do not do this straight away you may forget and slip over later.

☐ Are floor surfaces non-slip?

You could cover them with non-slip mats, a fitted carpet or carpet tiles.

☐ Do you have a letterbox cage to help you get to your post easily?

These are quite easy to fit and apart from saving you from stooping it will also stop papers being spread across the floor just inside the doorway which you could slip on.
Steps & stairs

Look at the stairs you use both inside and outside of your home

- **Are there papers, shoes, books or other objects on the stairs?**
  Pick up things on the stairs. Always keep objects off stairs.

- **Are some steps broken or uneven?**
  Ask someone to repair loose or uneven steps.

- **Do you have poor lighting or have only one light switch at the top or bottom of the stairs?**
  Use 100 watt bulbs (recommended) if the light fitting is capable of taking one of that size. A 20w low energy bulb can be left on permanently if required or use additional lighting, a table lamp or a night light to light the top and bottom of the stairs where possible. Night lights are low-energy lights that plug into a mains socket and emit a low-level light. It is recommended that you use the dusk-to-dawn type that switches on automatically.

- **Is the carpet on the steps loose or torn?**
  Ask someone to make sure that the carpet is firmly attached to every step, or remove the carpet and attach a non-slip rubber tread to the stairs.

- **Are your handrails loose or broken? Is there a handrail on both sides of the stairs and are they as long as the stairs?**
  Ask someone to refit loose handrails or put in new ones. Make sure handrails are on both sides of the stairs and are as long as the stairs.

- **Are you able to see the edges of the steps clearly?**
  Ask someone to paint a contrasting colour on the top edge of all steps so you can see the stairs better or alternatively ask someone to add non-slip masking tape. The tape must be kept in good condition to make sure it is not a trip hazard.

- **Has the stairway light bulb stopped working?**
  Have a friend or family member change the light bulb for you.
Lounge

Have a look around your lounge

☐ Can you get out of your chair easily?
If your chair is too high or low ask someone to adjust it to make it easier. Have you got supports on chair arms to assist you getting up or down?

☐ Do you have to lean or reach too far to open windows because furniture is in the way?
Ask someone to change the furniture layout to make it more accessible. Putting a chair in front of a window you use regularly is not a good idea.

☐ Do you have casters under chairs which make them likely to slide as you get up?
Casters make furniture easier to move but can cause you to slide back just as you are getting up. Either remove the casters or fit cup shaped carpet savers on the casters.

☐ If you fall do you have a system for calling for help?
A pendant alarm is a good way of doing this (See insert for details) and/or carrying a mobile phone with you at all times. Remember to keep your mobile phone charged.
Bathroom/WC

Look at your bathroom

☐ Is the bath or shower floor slippery?
Put a non-slip rubber mat or self-stick strips on the floor of the bath or shower.

☐ Is there a risk of falling on wet vinyl or tiled flooring?
Non-slip mats, a fitted carpet or carpet tiles should be used. Wet floor areas should be mopped as soon as possible.

☐ Do you need any support when you get in and out of the bath/shower or up from the toilet?
Ask someone to fit a grab rail to the wall over the bath, in the shower and/or next to the toilet. A bath board, bath lift, toilet frames or raised seats may be more suitable.

☐ Are you able to walk into the shower without stepping over a raised edge?
Are you able to get a bath replaced with a shower or wet room or make sure you have enough support with getting in and out with handrails.
Are the things that you often use located on high level shelves?
Rearrange items in your cupboards and cabinets so that you can get to them easily. Keep things you often use on shelves between waist and eye level as stretching and reaching above head height can make you lose your balance.

Is there good lighting over work areas?
Ask someone to install adequate lighting.

Is there a risk of falling on wet flooring especially near the sink and washing machine?
Check the condition of the floor in these areas, consider a piece of non-slip matting or dry away moisture regularly with a mop.

Consider using a trolley to help you carry food items from the kitchen to a dining area.
Trolleys are not recommended as a main walking aid, it is purely to transfer items. If you are unsteady, a trolley shouldn’t be used to help with this.
Bedrooms

Look at all your bedrooms

☐ Is the light near the bed hard to reach?
Place a lamp close to the bed where it’s easy to reach.

☐ Is the path from your bed to the bathroom dark?
Put in a nightlight so that you can see where you are walking. Nightlights are low-energy lights that plug into a mains socket and emit a low-level light. It is recommended that you use the dusk-to-dawn type that switches on automatically.

☐ Do you have sheets and bed covers trailing on the floor?
Tuck them out of the way when you first get out of bed: it is easy to trip up when moving around. It might be good for you to also consider bed linen that doesn’t trail on the floor.

☐ Is your bed at the right height? When sitting on the edge do your feet reach the floor?
If you have difficulty getting in or out of bed, you should consider a grab rail or some assistive equipment that can help you.

☐ Is there a telephone next to your bed?
It is useful to have a telephone nest to your bed in your bedroom. Also ensure your pendant alarm, should you have one, is within reach when you are in bed.

☐ Are cords from electric blankets, lamps, telephones safely secured?
Coil or tape cords and wires next to a wall so that you can’t trip over them.

☐ If you use a walking aid, is it within easy reach, before you get up from bed?
Place your walking aid in easy reach before going to bed.
Lighting

Look at the lighting in your property

☐ Are your lights bright enough for you to see clearly?
   Ask someone to change the bulbs for brighter ones.

☐ Is there good lighting where you take your medication?
   It is important to see what is written on your medication so that you are sure you are taking it correctly.

Pets

☐ How accessible are your food bowls for your pets?
   Long handled food/water bowls can be purchased to minimize bending (available on internet).

☐ Can litter trays be positioned at a more accessible height?
   Ask your family/carers to help with emptying these or put them nearer to an external door.

☐ Consider dog-walking service if appropriate.
   Details can be found on the internet of local providers.
Have a look around

☐ Are your paths clear of leaves and overgrowing plants?
   Keeping your garden tidy/free of obstacles will make it a lot safer.

☐ Are your paving stones free from moss and algae?
   Moss and algae become slippery when wet. They thrive in moist shady areas so prevent them from growing by pruning overhanging plants and branches to improve the light and air circulation. You can buy products to apply and rinse off to remove algae or you can ask someone to remove it with a pressure washer.

☐ Do you take care if you have to go out in icy weather?
   Spread salt or salty sand on your steps if you need to go outside.

☐ If you are using a ladder, is it at a safe angle and anchored at its base?
   Never use a ladder when you are on your own, it is far safer to have someone with you who can hold the ladder steady. Alternatively ask someone to help you by using the ladder themselves.

☐ Do you have any uneven or broken paving slabs/steps?
   Ask someone to straighten them up or replace them for you.

☐ Do you use a power point fitted with a residual current device (RCD) when using power tools and electric mowers?
   An RCD will shut off the power point if an electrical fault develops or if you accidentally cut through the cable.

☐ Do you have a high step to get in and out of the property?
   Ask someone to fix an additional step and grab rail to the outside of your property. Remember to use your walking aid outdoors as well.
Other Safety tips/things to do to help prevent a fall

- Keep emergency numbers in large print near each phone. If you have a mobile make sure they are in your contacts.

- Think about wearing a pendant alarm device (that can be worn around the neck) which when pressed will notify someone that you have had a fall and can’t get up. Alternatively a basic mobile phone can be purchased relatively cheaply, they can be obtained from many retailers or large supermarkets.

- Keep a torch by your bed and, if possible, one on each floor of your property to reduce the risk of falling if a power cut occurs. Make sure you have extra batteries for these as well.

- Wear correctly fitted shoes when inside and outside of the house. When inside avoid wearing loose-fitting slippers or going barefoot and the same applies for going outside.

- Try to clean up any spills straight away. Non-slip matting near the sink, washing machine, fridge or baths/shower may reduce the risk of slipping.

- Exercise regularly to improve your balance and make your legs stronger. This also helps you feel better and more confident.

- Have your Doctor or Pharmacist look at all the medicines you take, even over the counter medicines. Some medicines can make you sleepy or dizzy.

- Have your eyes checked by an Optician at least once a year and update your glasses.

- Get up slowly after you sit or lie down.

- Improve the lighting in your home. Put in brighter light bulbs. Florescent bulbs are bright and cost less to use.

- It’s safest to have similar lighting in a room. Add lighting to dark areas and remember to hang lightweight curtains or shades to reduce glare.

- Remember to consider regular chiropody checks for nail cutting and foot care if you are unable to manage independently.
You can get this leaflet in a format and language to suit your needs. If you would prefer this information in another language or alternative format (for example Easy Read, Braille, on audio tape or CD, or in large print), please contact us at sesstp.ucv@nhs.net

Sussex Health and Care Partnership

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Published April 2020
All information correct at time of printing
Useful Contact Details

- **Foundations** – information on Home Improvement Agencies who ensure people are able to stay safe, secure and warm and retain independence in their own home. They offer holistic services to their clients to help improve their wellbeing by offering practical solutions around the home.
  Tel: 0845 864 5210
  Web: [wwwFOUNDATIONS.UG.com](http://wwwFOUNDATIONS.UG.com)

- **Fall Assistant NHS App** – put together by a team of qualified physiotherapists to help self-assess key falls risks relevant to you and offer appropriate support and self-management advice, including strength and balance exercises.
  Web: [WWW.FALLSASSISTANT.ORG.UK](http://WWW.FALLSASSISTANT.ORG.UK)

- **Get up and go** – a guide to staying steady. This is a booklet by The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy if you are at risk of falls.

For Residents in East Sussex

- **Age UK East Sussex** – Information and Advice service, for free impartial advice.
  Tel: 01273 476704
  Email: customerservices@ageukeastsussex.org.uk

- **Adult Social Care East Sussex** – Health & Social Care Connect (HSCC) – Referral point for assessment of equipment/adaptations/Falls Alarms/social care assessments.
  Tel: 0345 6080191
  Email: HSCC@eastsussex.gov.uk

- **East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (ESFRS)** – Free Home Safety visit offering you a wide range of advice around home safety, the checking and fitting of smoke alarms and specialist equipment if required.
  Community Safety Team
  Tel: 0800 177 7069
  Email: homefire.safetyscisits@esfrs.org

- **Online directory of services**
  Web: [WWW.ESCIS.ORG.UK](http://WWW.ESCIS.ORG.UK)

- **Support with confidence** – Help at home you can trust with vetted and approved providers who offer a wide range of care and support services in East Sussex.
  Web: [WWW.EASTSUSSEX.GOV.UK/SOCIALCARE/SUPPORT-TO-STAY-AT-HOME/SUPPORT-WITH-CONFIDENCE](http://WWW.EASTSUSSEX.GOV.UK/SOCIALCARE/SUPPORT-TO-STAY-AT-HOME/SUPPORT-WITH-CONFIDENCE)
For Residents in West Sussex

► Age UK West Sussex – Information and Advice service, for free impartial advice.
  Tel: 0800 019 1310
  Email: information@ageukwestsussex.org.uk
  Web: www.ageuk.org.uk/westsussex

► West Sussex Adult Care point – Referral point for assessment of equipment/adaptations/Falls Alarms/social care assessments.
  Tel: 01243 642121
  Email: socialcare@westsussex.gov.uk

► Carewise – Information and advice to help ease the worry of paying for long-term care.
  For more information on the Carewise scheme and to arrange your free consultation, visit the Carewise website. www.carewiseadvice.com
  You can also contact Adults’ Care Point on 01243 642121 or email: socialcare@westsussex.gov.uk

For Residents in Brighton and Hove

► Age UK Brighton & Hove Information and Advice service, for free impartial advice.
  Tel: 01273 720603
  Email: info@ageuk-bh.org.uk

► Brighton and Hove Access Point
  Referral point for assessment of equipment/adaptations/Falls Alarms/social care assessments.
  Tel: 01273 295 555
  Web: https://new.brighton-hove.gov.uk/adult-social-care

► East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (ESFRS) – Free Home Safety visit offering you a wide range of advice around home safety, the checking and fitting of smoke alarms and specialist equipment if required.
  Community Safety Team Tel: 0800 177 7069
  Email: homefire.safetycisits@esfrs.org

► Brighton and Hove Aging Well – How to reduce your chances of falling, where to get help and information, and support if you’ve already had a fall. They can also suggest local services to improve your strength and balance.
  Tel: 01273 322 947
  Web: http://ageingwellbh.org/

► Active for Life – a wide variety of programmes are run across the city at a low cost, and suitable for beginners and wide range of abilities.
  Tel: 01273 294589
  Web: www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/leisure-and-libraries/sport-and-activity/activities-older-people

► CareLink Plus – Brighton & Hove telecare alarm service. Provide a range of services and equipment known as telecare to help support you at home. Through the Living Well team at CareLink can also assess for living equipment such as chair raisers, rails etc.
  Tel: 0300 123 3301
  Email: CareLinkPlus@brighton-hove.gov.uk and Livingwell@brighton-hove.gov.uk
  Web: www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/CareLinkplus

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**SIT TO STAND**
Sit up tall near the front of your chair. Place your feet slightly back and hip-width apart. Lean forwards slightly and stand up slowly – using your hands on the chair if needed. Step back until your legs gently touch the chair. Slowly lower your bottom back into the chair – using your hands if needed.
Repeat up to 10 times.

**HEEL RAISES**
Stand tall with your feet hip width apart. Hold your support. Slowly lift up your heels, keeping the weight over your big toes. Try not to lock your knees. Aim to lift for a slow count of 3 and lower for a slow count of 5 each time.
Repeat up to 10 times.

**TOE RAISES**
Stand tall with your feet hip width apart. Hold your support. Slowly lift the front of your foot, keeping your knees soft. Try not to stick your bottom out. Lower the toes slowly. Aim to lift for a slow count of 3 and lower for a slow count of 5 each time.
Repeat up to 10 times.

**HEEL TOE STAND**
Stand tall, holding on. Place one foot in front of the other so that your feet form a straight line. Look ahead and balance for 10 seconds – taking your hands off if possible. Take your feet back to hip width apart. Repeat with the other foot in front, balancing for another 10 seconds.

**HEEL TOE WALKING**
Stand tall, side on to your support. Walk 10 steps forwards placing one foot directly in front of the other so that your feet form a straight line. Look ahead and aim for a slow walking action. Only hold on if you need to. Take your feet back to hip width apart before turning slowly towards your support. Repeat the steps in the other direction.

**ONE LEG STAND**
Stand close to your support and hold on. Balance on one leg, keeping your leg straight but your knee soft. Stand tall. Hold for 10 seconds. Repeat with the other leg.
When and where to get help
Discuss any concerns or worries with your GP or other health care professional if you:

• have had more than one fall in the last 12 months
• had a fall in your home
• blacked out, were dizzy when you fell or found yourself on the floor and didn’t know why
• feel dizzy on standing up or when walking
• feel unsteady on your feet
• haven’t had a review of your medication in the last year
• don’t get out as much as you’d like as you’re worried about tripping or falling

Simple steps to staying steady
Falls are not an inevitable part of getting older - there are simple steps you can take to stay steady, reduce your chance of falling, prevent serious injuries if you do fall, and keep up and about.

• Keep active
• Manage your medicines
• Have regular eye checks
• Look after your feet
• Eat well
• Create a safer home
• Consider vitamin D
• Tell someone if you fall

Contact
Find more ways to stay steady and keep active at: www.westsussexwellbeing.org.uk
Adur and Worthing
01903 221450
Arun
01903 737862
Chichester
01243 521041
Crawley
01293 585317
Horsham
01403 215111
Mid Sussex
01444 477191

Many thanks to the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists and Saga for use of material from the ‘Get Up and Go’ falls prevention booklet - you can search for it online.
Top tips for you while in isolation during the Coronavirus

1. Keep mentally and physically active and make a plan as both offset low mood and worry.

2. Put your plan in to a diary form and stick to the plan!

3. Keep to a routine to support sleep & hygiene!

These measures are very important to you and even more crucial if you suffer with diabetes or any mental health issues.
Be active

Physical fitness
Plan an exercise and stretching routine daily – preferably in the morning and at tea time (movement improves our mood as it releases feel good chemicals in our bodies and helps our brains function and we become more mentally motivated too).

Be productive – do the chores that never get done: clear out cupboards, the garage, the shed. Weed the garden (research shows that positive people do not get depressed and see difficult times as opportunities).

If you are isolated with other family members, draw up a list of tasks and get everyone involved so you are working together as a team and supporting one another.

If you are with children they may get bored. Give them time focused tasks to do and things to make including physical games to play at home. Research has shown that boredom in children can lead to imaginative play and creativity.

Mental fitness
The National Academy of Sciences states that mental fitness is key to offsetting emotional difficulties.

Take your isolation as an opportunity to:

- Learn something new or brush up on a language for example!
- Play Sudoku / crosswords to stimulate parts of the brain which reduce anxiety.
- Be creative, bake bread or fix broken items in the home.
- Keep on the phone to family and friends use Skype, facetime or other forms of interactive social media if you have it to ‘see’ family and friends and make sure you are involved in supporting others who are also quarantined and living alone.

Don't worry! You are not alone in the world.
Eating Well with a Small Appetite

If you are eating less it is very important that the food you do eat contains as much nourishment as possible.

A nourishing diet should contain plenty of calories and protein.

The Good Food Guide

- **Eat little and often**, have 3 small meals daily as well as 2 - 3 snacks or milky drinks
- Meat, chicken, fish, well cooked eggs, cheese, yoghurt, nuts, beans and lentils are good sources of protein, aim to have **2 servings per day**
- **Drink at least 8 - 10 cups of fluid daily**. Try milky drinks, fruit juice, fruit squash or soup instead of tea or coffee. Take drinks after meals rather than before so that they don't fill you up
- **Use at least 1 pint of full cream milk daily** (blue top, silver top, sterilised, or UHT)
- **Have 1 serving** of bread, potatoes, rice, pasta or cereal **with each meal**. Choose wholemeal varieties if you like these
- **Try to eat fruit and vegetables daily, but ensure more nourishing foods are eaten first**. Drink a little glass of fruit juice or squash with added Vitamin C if little fruit is eaten

Ideas to Increase your Calorie Intake

**Fats** (e.g. butter, full fat margarine, double cream and olive/ sunflower oil) provide lots of calories, use them generously.

**Sugars** (e.g. sugar and honey) also provide calories and make your food taste good, use them generously.

Have a **pudding** once or twice per day (e.g. thick and creamy yoghurts, trifle, ice cream, rice pudding, fruit pie, sponge with custard or cream).

**Cakes, pastries, chocolate, biscuits and crisps** provide some extra calories. Try having these at the end of a meal or as a snack between meals but make sure they do not spoil your appetite for more nourishing foods.

*A small amount of alcohol taken half an hour before a meal can stimulate your appetite. Check with your Doctor before taking alcohol if you are on any medication, as alcohol should not be taken with some medicines.*
Ideas of How to Fortify Your Food

To a pint of full cream milk add:
4 tablespoons (50g/2oz) of dried milk powder to make fortified milk.

Aim to use 1 pint of fortified milk per day. Use in place of ordinary milk in drinks, cereal, soups, sauces and puddings.

To potatoes and vegetables add:
Grated cheese, fortified milk, double cream, cheese sauce, full fat margarine, butter. Try frying potatoes or vegetables in oil for a change.

To soup add:
Grated cheese, fortified milk, double cream, skimmed milk powder with added vegetable fat, evaporated milk, flaked meat or fish, pasta, rice, or dumplings.

To puddings add:
Double cream, custard, evaporated or condensed milk, ice cream, jam, syrup, honey, or fruit.

To breakfast cereals add:
Fortified milk, cream, evaporated or condensed milk, thick and creamy yoghurt, sugar, syrup, honey or fruit.

Store Cupboard Ideas

It is useful to have a store of basic foods so you are always prepared. Try the following suggestions:

- Long-life, dried or evaporated milk, tinned milk puddings (always choose full fat dairy products)
- Bottle of full sugar squash with added Vitamin C
- Breakfast cereals, crackers and crispbreads
- Instant mashed potato, rice and pasta
- Small tins of meat or fish
- Tinned vegetables including baked beans
- Tinned fruit or long-life fruit juice
- Tinned or packet soups
- Marmite or Bovril

Store cupboard foods don't keep forever. Check use by dates.

*If you have space, keep some frozen ready meals in your freezer, for example shepherd’s pie, curry and rice, pizza, spaghetti bolognaise, which can be easily re-heated with minimal preparation and cooking times.*
Ideas for Nourishing Snacks

- Sandwiches spread with butter, mayonnaise, or both
  - Fillings: cold meat, tinned fish, cheese, boiled egg or peanut butter, egg or tuna mayonnaise

- Toast with butter
  - Toppings: cheese, tinned fish, beans, eggs, tinned spaghetti, ravioli, or macaroni cheese

- Bread and butter with fish fingers, bacon and egg, kippers or smoked haddock

- Ready-made cauliflower or macaroni cheese with tomatoes

- Jacket potato with butter
  - Fillings: cheese, beans or tinned fish and mayonnaise

- Corned beef hash with grated cheese on top

- Sausages with beans, oven chips or potatoes

- Tinned stew or casserole with instant mashed potato

Puddings:

- Thick and creamy yoghurt
- Tinned fruit with double cream, evaporated or condensed milk or ice cream
- Fruit pie or sponge cake with custard
- Milk jelly or mousse
- Milk pudding e.g. rice pudding or semolina
Cakes and Biscuits:
- Crackers or biscuits with butter and cheese
- Scone, teacake, or crumpet with butter, cheese or jam
- Fruit cake or malt loaf with butter

Hot drinks made with Full Fat Milk:
Make the following with 100% full fat milk (blue top) or fortified milk and try adding double cream for extra calories
- Malted drinks e.g. Horlicks or Ovaltine
- Drinking chocolate or cocoa
- Instant soup, could add grated cheese
- Milky coffee or cappuccino
- Bovril or Marmite (non-milky)

Cold drinks made with milk:
Homemade Milkshakes or smoothies; use fortified milk and a combination of any of the following:
- Fruit juice, milkshake flavouring
- Mashed bananas or frozen fruit
- Thick and creamy yoghurt, cream, ice cream or condensed milk
- Peanut butter Lemon curd, chocolate spread
- Hot chocolate, Ovaltine or Horlicks powder

Fortified drinks:
Complan, Meritene, Nourishment, and alternatives are fortified drinks that can be bought from your pharmacy or supermarket and made up with full cream milk. They are available in savoury and sweet flavours and should be taken as a drink between meals.

Produced by Nutrition and Dietetics Department, East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust, November 2016