

How to eat more calories and protein when eating is a chore

For patients with cancer who have lost weight or have a poor appetite

This booklet will give you information about:

- Why calories and protein are important
 - How to know if you are getting enough calories and protein
 - How to eat more when you do not feel hungry
 - High-calorie and high-protein food, meal, and snack ideas
 - Recipes
-

Why are calories and protein important?

Eating enough calories and protein can help you:

- Keep your strength and energy
- Maintain your weight and muscle mass
- Cope with side effects from your treatment
- Lower your risk of infection
- Lower your risk of a hospital stay
- Heal and get better faster



How do I know if I am getting enough calories?

- Watch for changes in your weight. If you lose weight without trying, you may not be getting enough calories. See page 4 for a list of high-calorie foods to add to your diet.
- Weigh yourself at least once a week and write it down. If this is too stressful, ask your health care team to weigh you at each appointment.

How do I know if I am getting enough protein?

- A dietitian can help you determine how much protein you need each day.
- In general, people with cancer need more protein than usual. Try to eat a protein food at every meal and snack. See page 5 for a list of high-protein foods.

Do I need to take vitamin and mineral supplements?

- No, unless your doctor tells you differently. Your vitamin and mineral needs when you have cancer are the same as when you were healthy.
- A regular dose multivitamin-mineral supplement may help if you cannot eat a variety of foods. Your doctor or dietitian may recommend a multivitamin-mineral supplement.
- Big doses of vitamins and minerals can be harmful and are usually not recommended. Talk to your doctor, dietitian, or pharmacist about any vitamin and mineral supplements you are taking.

I am never hungry – how can I eat enough?

- **Choose high-calorie, high-protein foods** often. See pages 4 – 6 of this booklet for ideas.
- **Keep foods and snacks where you can see them** as a reminder to eat. Stock up on snacks like muffins, crackers, cheese, trail mix, and yogurt.
- **Eat small meals and snacks every 2 to 3 hours.** Do not wait to feel hungry.
- **Eat your favorite foods at any time of the day.** For example, try breakfast for dinner.
- **Go for a walk** before meals to increase your appetite.
- **Eat your biggest meal when you feel most hungry,** not when you usually would.
- **Choose fluids that give you energy** like milk, smoothies, soups, and 100% fruit juice.
- **Limit fluids with no calories and no protein** like water, tea, coffee, and broth. These will fill you up but do not have any protein or calories.
- **Drink fluids in-between meals,** not during meals, so that you do not fill up as quickly. If you do drink with meals, take small sips.
- **Make cooking easier:**
 - Keep easy-to-make foods that you know you like on hand, like frozen entrées, canned foods, eggs, and prepared foods from the grocery store
 - Order take-out
 - Accept offers from friends and family to cook meals or grocery shop
 - Cook and freeze meals when you have energy, to have on hand
- **Eat what tastes good,** even if that means eating the same foods every day.
- **Try nutrition supplement drinks.** Choose “plus” varieties for more calories. If these are too sweet, add plain milk or blend them in a smoothie.

High-calorie foods

♥Heart-healthy *Plant-based

Note: For lactose-free choose “lactose-free” cow’s milk products or plant-based options

High-Calorie Foods	Tips to Use Them
Canola, olive, and sunflower oil ♥*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pan-fry meats, fish, vegetables, and stir-fries • Toss to coat salads, vegetables, and pasta before adding sauce • Drizzle on popcorn • Dip bread in olive oil and balsamic vinegar • Add 1 Tbsp. of canola oil (because it is tasteless) to smoothies and soups
Avocado ♥*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat as a snack • Blend into smoothies or milkshakes • Spread on sandwiches and crackers • Add to tuna, egg, chicken, or mashed chickpea salad
Olives ♥*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat as a snack • Add to pasta, pizza, and salads
Butter, margarine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add to vegetables, mashed potatoes, hot cereal, and rice • Toss to coat pasta before adding sauce • Spread on bread and muffins
Cream	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use to make hot chocolate, soups, puddings, and sauces • Pour over Jell-O or fruit • Top pancakes, fruit, desserts, and hot drinks with whipped cream • Blend into smoothies or milkshakes
Cream cheese, mayonnaise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spread on sandwiches and crackers • Add to tuna, egg, chicken, or mashed chickpea salad
Jams, jellies, syrups * Honey, sweetened condensed milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spread on toast, muffins, and crackers • Add to yogurt, ice cream, hot cereals, and pudding • Blend into smoothies or milkshakes
Dried fruit, coconut *	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sprinkle on cereal, ice cream, and desserts • Mix with cereal and nuts to make trail mix

High-protein foods

These foods are also a good source of calories.

♥Heart-healthy *Plant-based
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High-Protein Foods	Tips to Use Them
Meat, poultry, and fatty fish ♥ (if choosing lean meat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add to salads, pasta, soups, omelets, and sandwiches • Eat fatty fish like salmon, trout, mackerel, herring or sardines • Add tuna to macaroni and cheese
Legumes (dried beans, peas, lentils) ♥*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add to salads, soups, stews, casseroles, and pasta sauce • Mix with rice and vegetable dishes • Eat hummus or bean dip with pita bread or crackers • Snack on cooked edamame beans or roasted chickpeas
Tofu ♥*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chop and add to soups, stir-fries, and salads • Blend into smoothies or milkshakes • Crumble onto pasta
Eggs ♥	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat boiled eggs as a snack, on salads, or on a sandwich • Make quiche, French toast, soufflés, and omelets • Cook into oatmeal and soups
Cheese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grate and add to potatoes, vegetables, soups, eggs, pasta, and meats • Dip veggies or bread in cheese sauce • Eat with fruit or crackers as a snack
Yogurt, sour cream, cottage cheese, ricotta cheese ♥	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat with fruit, honey, and nuts or seeds as a snack • Use to top vegetables, potatoes, casseroles, and soups • Use in muffins and pancakes • Blend into smoothies • Choose full-fat products for more calories • Choose Greek or Icelandic yogurt for more protein
Milk (cow, soy, pea) ♥*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use instead of water to make hot cereals and soups • Drink instead of water and use in smoothies • Choose whole 3.25% milk for more calories

Skim milk powder ♥	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add to mashed potatoes, cereals, soups, and puddings • Blend into smoothies and milkshakes • Use to make high-protein coffee (recipe on page 10) • Use to make high-protein milk (recipe on page 10)
Nuts and seeds ♥*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add to yogurt, cereal, oatmeal, ice cream, and puddings • Sprinkle on salads and stir-fries • Use in muffin and bread recipes • Make trail mix
Nut and seed butters (like peanut butter and tahini) ♥*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blend into smoothies or milkshakes • Use as a dip • Spread on bread, crackers, and fruit • Swirl through ice cream, yogurt, and hot cereals • Use to make salad dressing or sauce • Add to mashed chickpeas or lentils to make a spread

What are nutrition supplements?

Nutrition supplements are high-calorie and/or high-protein products that can replace or supplement (add extra nutrition to) a meal or snack. Examples are:

- Nutrition supplement drinks like Ensure, Boost, and generic store brands
- Nutrition supplement puddings
- Protein powders like whey, soy, or pea protein

Try to get as much nutrition as you can from a variety of foods. If you cannot do this, nutrition supplements are a great choice.

Samples are available for patients at the Nutrition Resource Centre, T-Wing ground floor, TG-261 (across from the café).

High-calorie and high-protein meal and snack ideas

Breakfast ideas

- **Oatmeal or Cream of Wheat** cooked with milk or soy milk instead of water. Whisk in an egg while cooking or stir in peanut butter. Add cinnamon, raisins, chopped nuts, fresh fruit, and brown sugar.
- **Smoothie** with added protein foods like Greek yogurt, nut butter, tofu, protein powder, or skim milk powder. Use milk, soy milk, or high-protein milk* as your fluid.
- **Scrambled eggs or tofu** topped with cheese. Serve with sliced avocado or baked beans.
- **French toast or banana pancakes*** topped with syrup, fresh fruit, ricotta cheese, yogurt, peanut butter, or whipped cream.
- **Omelet** made with vegetables, cheese, and olives and fried in olive oil or butter.
- **Cereal** with high-protein milk* and added chopped nuts, seeds, and dried fruit.
- **Greek or Icelandic yogurt or cottage cheese** with honey, fruit, and chopped nuts or seeds.
- **Toast, bagel, or bun** with peanut butter and honey, butter and cheese, or cream cheese and smoked salmon.
- **Fried rice** with protein foods like fried eggs, chicken, pork, shrimp, or tofu. Add extra olive oil to rice for even more calories.
- **Congee** with protein foods like eggs, chicken, tofu, shrimp, or pork. Stir in olive oil for extra calories or flavourless protein powder for more protein.

*See recipe on pages 10 - 12

Lunch and dinner ideas

- **Sandwich** with a high-protein filling – try egg, tuna, salmon, chicken, or chickpea salad, peanut butter, hummus, or cheese. Spread with butter, mayo, or avocado.
- **Soups** with cream, chicken, fish, tofu, beef, eggs, or legumes (dried beans, peas, or lentils). Add flavourless protein powder or chickpea flour for more protein.
- **Samosas** filled with meat.
- **Meat or fish** served with gravy and high-protein mashed potatoes.*
- **Meat pies** served with high-protein mashed potatoes.*
- **Quiche** made with cream, ham, and cheese.
- **Stir-fry** made with tofu or meat and served with peanut sauce.
- **Chili** with extra beans or ground meat, topped with full-fat sour cream, grated cheese, or avocado.
- **Nachos or tacos** topped with beans, cheese, olives, guacamole, full-fat sour cream, and/or salsa.
- **Dhal** topped with plain Greek yogurt and served with roti or naan.
- **Stew** made with meat or legumes (dried beans, peas, or lentils), and served over high-protein mashed potatoes.*
- **Pasta or lasagna** with meat or lentils added to the sauce.
- **Pierogis or dumplings** filled with meat, cheese, or beans, pan-fried, and topped with full-fat sour cream and grated cheese.
- **Fried rice with protein foods** like fried eggs, chicken, pork, shrimp or tofu. Add extra olive oil to rice for even more calories.
- **Congee with protein foods** like eggs, chicken, tofu, shrimp, or pork. Stir in olive oil for extra calories or flavourless protein powder for more protein.

*See recipe on pages 10 - 12

Snack ideas

- Peanut butter with apple slices, celery sticks, or crackers
- Banana muffin with peanut butter or cheese
- Hummus or tzatziki made with Greek yogurt spread on pita bread
- Cottage cheese with chopped apple, cinnamon, and maple syrup
- Cottage cheese on crackers with sliced cherry tomatoes
- Egg, tuna, salmon, chicken, chickpea, or lentil salad with vegetables or crackers
- Fruit smoothie with $\frac{1}{4}$ cup skim milk powder or protein powder
- Handful of edamame beans or roasted chickpeas
- Hardboiled egg
- Bean dip with crackers, vegetables, or chips
- Popcorn with butter or olive oil and parmesan cheese, mixed with nuts
- Sliced cheese with fruit
- Trail mix made with nuts, seeds, dried fruit, and cereal
- Yogurt with nuts and seeds, honey, and fruit
- Avocado mashed with white beans and spread on toast

Dessert ideas

- Rice pudding or coconut mango sticky rice with added skim milk powder or protein powder
 - Dessert tofu with fruit
 - Ice cream, frozen yogurt, or milkshakes
 - Cheesecake
 - Pudding/custard made with milk, soy milk, or high-protein milk*
 - Creamy Jell-O*
- *See recipe on pages 10 - 12



Recipes

High-Protein Milk

Makes 1 cup (250 ml) - 244 calories, 17 g protein

Ingredients:

- 1 cup (250 ml) 3.25% whole milk
- ¼ cup (60 ml) skim milk powder

Directions:

1. Blend milk and skim milk powder.
2. Place in covered container and store in the fridge. You can make this in bigger batches and use it like regular milk in recipes and to drink.

High-Protein Coffee

Makes 1 cup (250 ml) - 117 calories, 9 g protein

Ingredients:

- 1 cup (250 ml) coffee
- 2 Tbsp. (30 ml) cream
- Sugar or honey to taste
- ¼ cup (60 ml) skim milk powder

Directions:

1. Blend coffee, cream, and sugar/honey.
2. Stir in skim milk powder.

Oatmeal

Makes ¾ cup (175 ml) cooked oatmeal – 165 calories, 8 g protein (without toppings)

Ingredients:

- 1 pack instant oatmeal
- 2 Tbsp. (30 ml) skim milk powder

Directions:

1. Make oatmeal as directed and mix skim milk powder into hot oatmeal.
2. Top with cinnamon, raisins, chopped nuts, fresh fruit, peanut butter and/or brown sugar.

Banana Pancakes

Makes 3 pancakes – 380 calories, 16 g protein (without toppings)

Ingredients:

- 1 ripe banana
- 2 eggs
- 3 Tbsp. (45 ml) pancake mix (or flour)
- Butter for frying

Directions:

1. In a medium bowl, mash banana. Beat in eggs. Stir in pancake mix.
2. Fry pancakes in butter over medium heat.
3. Top with peanut butter, butter, syrup, fresh fruit and/or whipped cream.

Smoothie

Makes 2 cups (500 ml)

1 cup (250 ml) has 242 calories, 18 g protein (if using soy milk and pea protein powder)

Ingredients:

- 1 cup (250 ml) soy milk or 3.25% whole milk
- ¼ cup (60 ml) protein powder
- 1 frozen banana
- ½ avocado
- ½ cup (125 ml) raw spinach

Directions:

1. Place all ingredients except protein powder in a blender and blend until smooth.
2. Add protein powder and blend for 2 seconds. Adding protein powder at the end prevents foaming.

Mashed Potatoes

Makes ½ cup (125 ml) mashed potatoes – 236 calories, 11 g protein

Ingredients:

- ½ cup (125 ml) mashed potatoes made with milk/cream and margarine/butter (or try mashed sweet potato, turnip, or squash)
- 2 Tbsp. (30 ml) skim milk powder
- 2 Tbsp. (30 ml) shredded cheddar cheese

Directions:

1. Mix skim milk powder into mashed potatoes.
2. Top with shredded cheese.

Creamy Jell-O

Makes 2 cups (500 ml) Jell-O

½ cup (125 ml) has 124 calories, 6 g protein

Ingredients:

- 1 package of Jell-O
- 1 cup (250 ml) boiling water
- 1 cup (250 ml) plain Greek yogurt

Directions:

1. Dissolve Jell-O powder in boiling water.
2. Whisk in 1 cup plain Greek yogurt until smooth.
3. Chill in fridge until firm (about 4 hours).

Tip:

- This can also be made with 1 cup (250 ml) evaporated milk instead of Greek yogurt, for a thinner texture. ½ cup (125 ml) would then have 141 calories, 5 g protein.

If you are a patient at the Odette Cancer Centre and you would like more nutrition information, please visit the Nutrition Resource Centre, T-Wing ground floor, TG-261 (across from the café) or call 416-480-5000 ext. 3438