

# Nutrition Supplement Drinks

For patients with cancer

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**This booklet will give you information about:**

- Why you might drink a nutrition supplement
- What kind of nutrition supplement drink to try
- How many nutrition supplements to drink
- What to do if you don't like the taste
- Recipe ideas

This information does not replace the advice of your doctor or an individual consultation with a registered dietitian. This information may only be used in its entirety.

# Nutrition Supplement Drinks

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Nutrition supplements can help you get enough nutrition if you have problems eating. You can use them to replace a meal or snack. There are lots of nutrition supplements to choose from, and many of them will give you the nutrition you need.

Examples of nutrition supplement drinks are Ensure<sup>®</sup>, Boost<sup>®</sup>, Resource Diabetic<sup>®</sup>, Glucerna<sup>®</sup>, and generic/store brands like Equate Meal Replacement<sup>®</sup>, President's Choice Nutri-Total<sup>®</sup>, and Kirkland Signature Nutrition Shake<sup>®</sup>.

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

**Note: This is not a full list of brands or products. The Odette Cancer Centre does not recommend one brand over another and is not responsible for any products listed. A registered dietitian can help you determine which product will best meet your nutrition needs.**

# Why would I drink a nutrition supplement?

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During your cancer treatment, a health care provider may tell you to eat more calories and/or protein to help your body stay strong, heal, and recover. At the same time, you may find it hard to eat and drink because of symptoms and side effects from your cancer and treatment.

It is important to try and get as much nutrition as you can from a variety of foods. If you cannot do this, nutrition supplement drinks are a great choice.

Nutrition supplement drinks can help you:

- Stop losing weight
- Add extra protein and calories to your diet
- Get enough nutrition if you can only drink fluids or if you are too tired to cook
- Safely meet all of your nutrition needs through a feeding tube if you can't eat or drink

# What kind of nutrition supplement drink should I try?

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With so many nutrition supplement choices, you might wonder which one is best for you. Some have more calories or protein, different flavours, or added fibre. Even how a nutrition supplement drink is packaged may affect your choice!

Here are our top 3 tips for choosing a nutrition supplement:

- **Find a taste you like.** This is the most important factor when you choose a nutrition supplement drink. If you enjoy the taste you are more likely to drink it, which means you will get more nutrition. Try different varieties and flavours to see which one you like best.
- **High-calorie and high-protein varieties pack more nutrition in a smaller amount of liquid.** These make it easier to meet your nutrition needs when you don't feel hungry (they are often labeled 'plus,' 'high-protein,' or 'compact').
- **If you have a medical condition such as diabetes or kidney disease,** there are special nutrition supplement drinks to help meet your needs. Ask a dietitian if you're not sure of your choices.

# How many nutrition supplements should I drink each day?

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A registered dietitian can help you determine your nutrition needs and make a recommendation for you.

# What if I don't like the taste of nutrition supplement drinks?

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- Add a pinch of salt or mix-in some milk if you find them too sweet.
- Change the temperature - refrigerate, serve over ice, or slightly warm your nutrition supplement drink. Try freezing it into popsicles or ice cubes.
- Use a nutrition supplement drink in smoothies and other dishes – see the end of this handout for recipe ideas.
- Mix-up the flavour so you don't get tired of drinking the same one.

# Recipes

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## Café Latté

### Ingredients:

- 1 bottle (about 240 ml) vanilla nutrition supplement drink
- 1 – 2 tsp. (5 – 10 ml) instant coffee
- 2 Tbsp. (30 ml) hot water

### Directions:

Dissolve instant coffee in hot water and add to nutrition supplement. Enjoy hot or cold.

### Tip:

Use a chocolate nutrition supplement for a mocha twist!

## Rice Pudding

### Ingredients:

- 1 bottle (about 240 ml) vanilla nutrition supplement drink
- 1 cup (250 ml) cooked rice
- Toppings: cinnamon, raisins (optional)

### Directions:

Add cooked rice and nutrition supplement to a small pot. Heat on low, stirring often, until most of the nutrition supplement is absorbed into rice. Mix in raisins and cinnamon and enjoy hot or cold.

## Berry Smoothie

### Ingredients:

- 1 bottle (about 240 ml) cold nutrition supplement drink
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (175 ml) frozen mixed berries

### Directions:

Add all ingredients to blender and blend until smooth.

Tip: If the smoothie is too sweet, add plain Greek yogurt. Start with a  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (60 ml) and add more as needed.

## Cream of Wheat<sup>®</sup>

### Ingredients:

- 1 bottle (about 240 ml) nutrition supplement drink
- 3 Tbsp. (45 ml) Cream of Wheat<sup>®</sup> cereal
- Toppings: milk, fresh fruit, nuts, seeds, raisins, granola, coconut (optional)

### Stovetop directions:

Add nutrition supplement and Cream of Wheat<sup>®</sup> to a small pot. Bring to a boil. Lower heat and stir until cereal thickens (about 1 minute).

### Microwave directions:

Add nutrition supplement and Cream of Wheat<sup>®</sup> to a 1 L (1000 ml) microwave-safe bowl. Microwave for 1 to 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  minutes. Stir for 1 minute.

Tip: If the Cream of Wheat<sup>®</sup> is too sweet, make with  $\frac{1}{2}$  bottle (about 120 ml) of nutrition supplement drink and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup (125 ml) of whole milk. Top with raspberries, blueberries, or blackberries.



**If you are a patient at the Odette Cancer Centre and you have questions about healthy eating or you would like to book an appointment with a registered dietitian, please contact the Nutrition Resource Centre:**

T-Wing ground floor, TG-261 (across from the café)  
(416) 480-6100 ext. 3438

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