

Adding Calories and Protein to Your Diet

To help your body heal

Why do I need to eat more calories and protein?

You have higher calorie and protein needs while you are healing from oral surgeries or being treated with radiation or chemotherapy.

To meet these increased needs, try to eat or drink something high in calories and protein 6 times a day. Eating smaller meals more often will make it easier to reach your calorie and protein goals.

Your normal meals or snacks may not have enough calories and protein to meet your body’s needs after surgery. For example, tomato soup may meet your need for soft foods after surgery, but it does not have enough calories or protein on its own. There are ways to add calories and protein to foods you are already eating. See the chart below for examples.

Adding Calories	Adding Protein
Add 2 to 3 tablespoons of oil or butter to mashed potatoes, soups, sauces, or any savory foods to add extra fats.	Add unflavored protein powder to congee, refried beans, soups, or overcooked rice or pasta dishes.
Add canned coconut milk to smoothies, soups, milkshakes, hot cereal, rice porridge, or puddings.	Blend cooked meats (such as chicken or beef) with broth and add to gravy. Eat over mashed potatoes.
Stir sour cream and cheese into soups, refried beans, or overcooked pasta or rice.	Stir full-fat Greek yogurt into smoothies, puddings, milkshakes.
Stir heavy cream into coffee, tea, milkshakes, smoothies, soups, rice, hot cereals, or puddings.	Add blended legumes or edamame to soups, congee, or overcooked pasta or rice.

Small Meal and Snack Ideas

Eating snacks or small meals between your main meals can help add protein and calories to your day. Try:

- Ensure Complete (350 calories, 30g of protein). If you do not like the taste, drink it over ice to water it down. You can also use it in place of milk or milk-alternatives in smoothies.

- Naked brand protein smoothies (390 calories, 30g of protein).
- Full-fat Greek yogurt (2% to 5% fat). For flavor, add fruit, granola, peanut butter, honey, or cereal.
- Hot or cold cereals with peanut butter or Ensure to add flavor and protein.
- Smoothies made with protein sources such as tofu, cottage cheese, yogurt, or milk powder. Also include a fat source such as peanut butter, avocado, or full-fat coconut milk.

Dessert

Desserts are often high in calories. This makes them a great choice for healing for surgery. You can include a dessert nightly, or even 2 times a day. Try:

- Milkshakes made with ice cream and Ensure or Fairlife milk for added protein and calories.
- Instant pudding mixes made with Ensure or whole milk. Add protein powder for more protein.

Examples of Products

The products in the chart below are all high in calories and protein. You can buy these at most major grocery stores.

			
<p>Fage brand vanilla yogurt (2% milk fat) (120 calories and 12g protein per container)</p>	<p>Fairlife (lactose-free) 2% chocolate milk (140 calories and 13g protein per 1 cup serving)</p>	<p>Cottage cheese (4% milk fat) (110 calories and 12g protein per 1/2 cup serving)</p>	<p>Siggi's brand vanilla yogurt (4% milk fat) (130 calories and 12g protein per container)</p>



Naked brand protein shake
(390 calories and 30g protein per bottle)



Ensure Oral Supplement
(350 calories and 30g protein per bottle)



Chobani Complete lactose-free yogurt shake
(90 calories and 25g protein per bottle)



Instant Mashed Potatoes
(110 calories and 2g protein per 1/4 cup of dry powder)



Boost Very High Calorie shake
(530 calories and 22g protein per bottle)



Cream of Wheat Instant hot cereal
(100 calories and 3g protein per serving)



Unjury soup base whey protein packets
(10.5g protein per packet)



Nestle Nido Dry Whole Milk Powder
(150 calories and 8g protein per 1/4 cup powder)

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

Outpatient Consult line: Call 206.635.8346 weekdays from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Your dietitian's name and phone number:
