

Eating to Heal

Increasing calories and protein in your diet

This handout has tips and information on increasing calories and protein to promote recovery from illness or injury.

Part of recovering from an illness or injury depends on good nutrition. During and after injury, illness, or surgery, your body uses more energy. You will need to provide more calories through the food you eat. Eating enough of the right foods will help your body:

- Heal wounds and bone injuries.
- Fight infections.
- Reach and stay at a healthy weight.
- Feel stronger and more energized.

Tips for Improving Your Appetite

- Try not to skip meals. If you cannot eat much at one meal, try eating smaller meals more often.
- Keep healthy snacks that you enjoy at home.
- Daily exercise can help develop an appetite. Talk to your doctor or physical therapist about starting or continuing exercise in recovery.
- Taking medicines on an empty stomach may cause nausea or make the medication less effective. Please read all medicine labels carefully and follow instructions.

How to Add Calories in Your Diet

- Snack often between meals. Keep “grab and go” foods on hand such as peanut butter and crackers, fruit, cereal or protein bars, dry cereal, nuts, and pudding.
- Eat fruits canned in heavy syrup. Try stirring canned fruit into yogurt or ice cream.
- Add olives, seeds, or sliced avocado to salads and entrees.
- Add extra butter, sour cream, gravy, cream-based sauces, cheese, or cream cheese to foods.

- Use whole milk in smoothies, hot or cold cereal, pudding, and hot chocolate.
- Use cream or half and half in coffee, tea, mashed potatoes, soups and stews, and hot cereal.
- Add sugar, honey, jam, jelly, or syrup to foods for extra sweetness and calories.
- Choose creamy soups instead of broth-based soups.

How to Add Protein

Good sources of protein include dairy products, meats, eggs, nuts, nut butters, soymilk, and tofu.

- Use milk or soymilk instead of water when making soups, cereal, instant cocoa, and puddings.
- Make “double strength milk” by adding 1 cup of regular non-fat dry milk powder to 1 quart of whole milk. Try using this in cereal, shakes, and smoothies.
- Add non-fat milk powder to mashed potatoes, pudding, custards, milkshakes, meatloaf, casseroles, and hot cereals.
- Add diced or ground meat to soups and casseroles.
- Add shredded cheese to sauces, casseroles, and vegetables.
- Try cottage cheese with fruit.
- Try peanut butter with crackers, bread, celery, apples, bananas, or pears.
- Snack on nuts and trail mix.
- Good vegetarian sources of protein include soy products (such as tofu or soymilk), beans, and bean dips (such as hummus or refried bean dip).
- Add protein powder to drinks or soups.
- Try Carnation Instant Breakfast® with whole milk.

Calories and Protein in Foods

The chart on the next page lists calories and protein in different foods. Use this as a guide to make sure you are getting enough calories and protein daily.

Calories and Protein in Food Chart

Food	Serving size	Calories	Protein
Whole milk	1 cup	145 – 155 calories	8 grams
Soy milk (original, Silk brand)	1 cup	110 calories	8 grams
Non-fat milk powder	3 tbsp powder	90 calories	8 grams
Cheddar cheese	1 ounce	114 calories	7 grams
Cottage cheese	1/2 cup	80 calories	15 grams
Low-fat yogurt (2% milk fat)	3/4 cup	110 calories	15 grams
Soy yogurt (plain, Silk brand)	3/4 cup	110 calories	7 grams
Egg	1 large	78 calories	6 grams
Egg substitute (Egg Beaters)	3 tbsp	25 calories	5 grams
Chicken breast	1 cup (chopped)	231 calories	43 grams
Chicken thigh (without skin)	3 ounces	163 calories	20 grams
Ground turkey (93% lean)	3 ounces	181 calories	23 grams
Ground beef (85% lean)	3 ounces	218 calories	24 grams
Tuna (light, canned in water, drained)	5-ounce can	100 calories	23 grams
Salmon (sockeye)	3 ounces	143 calories	22 grams
Shrimp	3 ounces	84 calories	20.4 grams
Beyond Burger	1 patty	230 calories	20 grams
Cashews (raw, unsalted)	1 ounce	157 calories	5 grams
Peanuts (roasted, salted)	1 ounce	170 calories	7 grams
Almonds (roasted, salted)	1 ounce	170 calories	6 grams
Peanut butter	2 tbsp	190 calories	8 grams
Tofu, soft	3 ounces	60 calories	5 grams
Tofu, firm	3 ounces	70 calories	7 grams
Black beans	1/2 cup	110 calories	7 grams
Garbanzo beans	1/2 cup	120 calories	6 grams
Dark red kidney beans	1/2 cup	130 calories	8 grams

High-calorie and High-protein Drinks

The recipes below are for drinks to help you get enough calories and protein. You can change out some ingredients based on your preferences.

Milk Mixture	
Combine: 1 quart regular whole milk 1 cup powdered milk	Per 8-oz. portion: 265 calories 18 grams protein
<i>Chill and use in place of regular milk for cooking or in special drinks.</i>	

Breakfast in a Glass	
Blend until smooth: ½ cup whole milk or Milk Mixture ¼ cup orange or pineapple juice ¼ cup liquid egg substitute ½ banana 1 teaspoon sugar	Per 10-oz. portion: <i>With whole milk:</i> 210 calories 10 grams protein <i>With Milk Mixture:</i> 270 calories 15 grams protein

Egg Nog	
Blend until smooth: 1 cup whole milk or Milk Mixture ¼ cup liquid egg substitute ½ teaspoon sugar	Per 10-oz. portion: <i>With whole milk:</i> 210 calories 14 grams protein <i>With milk mixture:</i> 320 calories 25 grams protein

High-protein Shake	
Blend until smooth: ½ cup whole milk 1 cup ice cream 1 package Carnation Instant Breakfast	Per 12-oz. portion: 340 calories 10 grams protein

Basic Banana Smoothie	
Blend until smooth: 1 cup vanilla 2% low-fat yogurt 1 frozen banana 3 ice cubes	Per 10-oz. portion: 300 calories 12 grams protein

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 provider's name and
number:
