

During illness, treatment, or recovery, the need for calories and protein may be greater than usual. The following suggestions can help increase the number of calories you consume.

- Eat 5 – 6 small meals and snacks each day instead of 3 large meals – or, remember to snack throughout the day. This will take some work if you are used to eating just a couple of times each day. It is not possible to get all the nutrition you need in one meal.
- Gradually increase portion sizes so that your stomach can get used to larger amounts of food. Stock your kitchen with your favorite foods and keep snacks handy – hunger may only last a few minutes.
- Drink 2 – 3 glasses of milk each day.
- Always have a bedtime snack.
- Drink at least 2-3 high calorie, high protein shakes/day.
- Use butter or oils generously on potatoes, breads, hot cereals and vegetables.
- Add sliced avocado or guacamole to salads and sandwiches.
- Top hot cereal with brown sugar, honey, butter, dried fruit, bananas, cream or nut butter.
- Top pie, cake, gelatin or pudding with ice cream or whipped cream.
- Drink beverages that contain calories, such as fruit juice, lemonade, fruit flavored drinks, malts, floats, cocoa, milkshakes, smoothies and eggnog.

## **Increasing Protein**

Protein is important for growth, health and repair of your body. If you have been ill, you may need extra protein. Suggestions include:

- Add extra meat, chicken, cheese or beans (navy, black, and kidney) to casseroles, soups or stews.
- Make your own high-protein milk: Add 1/4 cup powdered milk to 1 cup whole milk, or 1 cup powdered milk to 1– quart whole milk. Use it as a beverage, add it to malts or shakes, hot cereals, cream soups, mashed potatoes or use it in cooking.
- Spread peanut butter or other nut butters on toast, bread, pretzels, apples or banana slices, crackers, or celery.
- Purchase high protein shakes at your grocery store or other retailers. If you are diabetic, look for sugar free.

## **High Protein and/or High Calorie Foods**

### **Meat**

- Chicken, turkey: Prepared any way, including soups, casseroles and salads. Add more chicken than the recipe calls for.
- Chicken salad, tuna salad, egg salad, crab salad: Add extra mayonnaise
- Pork: Any kind, preferably lean- pork chops, pork loin, tenderloin, pork roast, barbeque
- Beef: Burgers, steaks, beef stew, sloppy joe, chili, pot roast, tacos
- Fish: Cod, salmon, orange roughy, perch, tilapia, tuna, crab cakes, etc.
- Chili: With meat and/or beans, beans & cornbread, rice & beans, pork, etc.
- Veggie burgers
- Dried Beans: Pinto, navy, lima, black-eyed peas, black beans, kidney beans
- Eggs: Egg salad, omelets, egg casserole, cheese strata



### **Dairy**

- Milk, buttermilk, shakes, cottage cheese, yogurt, eggnog
- Cheese: Cheddar, mozzarella, gouda, colby, swiss, parmesan, monterey jack, etc. (Limit processed cheese such as American, Cheese Whiz, and Velveeta).
- Instant and cooked puddings. Read labels of packaged puddings to make sure they contain milk.
- Add non-fat dry milk or whey powder to soups, mashed potatoes, cocoa, milkshakes, hot cereal, gravies, meatloaf and puddings to increase protein.
- Milkshakes, ice cream, frozen custard, gelato
- Cheesecake, cream pies, rice pudding, custard

### **High protein shakes and bars**

- Carnation Breakfast Essentials packets made with whole milk or cream. (280 cal, 15 gms Protein)
- Carnation Breakfast Essentials (240 cal/8 oz. bottle)
- Ensure (250 cal/8 oz.), Ensure Plus (350 cal/8 oz.), Ensure Alive (350 cal/8 oz.)
- Ensure Compact (220 cal/4 oz.)
- Muscle Milk (200 cal/4 oz.)
- Boost (250 cal/8 oz.), Boost Plus (350 cal/8 oz.), Boost Compact (240 cal/4 oz.)
- Mighty Shakes (200 cal/4 oz.) Available at some Gordon foods or may be ordered online.
- Walmart Brand: Equate Shake (250 cal/8 oz.), Equate Plus Shake (324 cal/8 oz.).
- Larabar-(200 cal/1 bar) - not high in protein, but good calorie source (~130-200 cal/bar)
- May add ice cream, peanut butter, syrups (chocolate, strawberry, etc.) to supplements for more calories and better flavor.

### **Other**

- Peanut butter, almond butter
- Nuts, any kind. Add to hot and cold cereals, yogurt, and ice cream
- Quinoa (Pronounced Keen Wah): Grain with complete protein, in the rice and pasta section of the store. Needs to be flavored with broth, herbs, sautéed onions or garlic or make a cold salad by adding cucumbers, tomatoes, cucumbers, onions, corn, etc. with Italian dressing.
- Macaroni and cheese, fettuccini alfredo
- Scalloped, au gratin and mashed potatoes with gravy
- Biscuits and sausage gravy
- Cream soups: Add extra meat, chicken, etc.
- Avocado, guacamole

### **Fluids**

- Drink as much water as possible – it will make you feel so much better!
- Choose drinks that contain calories. Limit regular soft drinks
- Try fruit juice, lemonade, fruit-flavored drinks, milk, jello, soups, malts, floats, hot cocoa, milkshakes, smoothies, eggnog and high protein shakes.

### **Vitamins**

- You may need to take a daily multivitamin. Check with your provider to see which vitamin or mineral supplement to take. Do not take any high doses of vitamins, minerals, teas, extract, etc. without your provider's OK.

**Snacks*****200 calorie Snacks***

½ peanut butter and jelly sandwich  
2 Tbsp. peanut butter  
1 slice cheese pizza  
¾ cup ice cream or 1 cup pudding  
1 cup chocolate milk  
4 slices bacon  
¼ cup of sunflower seeds  
12 oz. orange juice  
16 cashews  
4 tbsp. raisins  
1 ½ oz. peanuts  
5 oz. eggnog  
10 oz. grape juice

***300 calorie or more***

½ cup nuts-cashews, macadamia, pecans, peanuts and mixed nuts are the highest in calories  
1 ½ cup pudding, instant or cooked with milk (Jell-O puddings, not pre-packaged)  
2 oz. turkey on 1 slice bread-add mayo for more calories!  
¾ cup potato salad  
1 ½ cup chocolate milk  
1 banana with 1 ½ TBSP of peanut butter  
1 ¼ cup rice pudding, made with whole milk  
¾ cup macaroni and cheese  
Peanut butter sandwich (each additional TBSP of peanut butter=90 calories)  
1 1/4 cup regular ice cream or 2/3 cup of higher fat ice cream such as Ben and Jerry's Ice cream  
2 oz. Peanut M&M's  
1 cup cottage cheese with fruit  
12 oz. eggnog or 1 cup custard made with whole milk  
1 piece pumpkin pie or piece of chocolate cream pie  
10 oz. milkshake  
½ cup of tuna packed in oil mixed with mayo

Though some of the suggestions add more fat and sugar to your diet, they may help you during times when you are not eating enough and/or losing weight. When you are eating adequately and your weight is stable, you should change to a healthier diet lower in sugar and added fats.

**References**

The American Institute for Cancer Research. Retrieved November 12, 2021, from [www.aicr.org](http://www.aicr.org)  
Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Retrieved November 12, 2021, from [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)