



# Increasing Calories and Protein in Your Diet

UHN

## For patients having difficulty eating during cancer treatment

This pamphlet covers:

- Why calories and proteins are important during cancer treatment
- How to add high calorie and high protein foods to meals and snacks
- Eating tips

Eating during cancer treatment can sometimes be difficult. Focusing on high calorie and high protein foods can help.

Calories from the foods you eat give your body energy. Energy is important to help keep your weight stable and help you stay strong during treatment.

Protein helps your body heal, maintain muscle and build your immune system to fight infections.

## **How to Add More Calories to Your Diet**

You do not always need to eat more food to get more calories. Add some high calorie foods below to your meals or snacks.

### **Butter, margarine and vegetable oils**

- Add to hot cereals, soups, mashed potatoes, rice, pasta and cooked vegetables
- Spread on bread when making sandwiches

### **Table cream, whipped cream and non-dairy toppings**

- Use in soups and sauces
- Add to hot chocolate, gelatin desserts and cereals
- Put on top of pancakes, waffles, French toast and fruit

### **Cream cheese and mayonnaise**

- Add to sandwiches, bagels, crackers and fruit

### **Jams, syrups and honey**

- Add to breads, muffins, yogurt, and hot cereal
- Spread on pancakes, waffles and French toast

## **How to Add More Protein to Your Diet**

Add some of the high protein foods below to your meals or snacks.

### **Meat, poultry and fish**

- Add leftovers to salads, casseroles, soups, eggs and pasta dishes

### **Eggs**

- Chop and add to salads, casseroles and soups
- Keep hard boiled eggs in the refrigerator to use as a snack

### **Legumes (such as lentils, chick peas)**

- Add to salads and soups
- Mix with rice, pasta and vegetable dishes

### **Milk**

- Use in soups and sauces
- Use in hot chocolate, hot cereals and gelatin desserts instead of water
- Drink 'high protein' milk instead of regular milk and use it for cooking (see recipe)

#### **High Protein Milk Recipe**

1 cup (250 mL) whole milk  
2 tbsp (60 mL) skim milk powder

1. Add milk powder to liquid milk. Blend well.
2. Refrigerate.
3. Use within 24 hours.

### **Cheese and cottage cheese**

- Add to sandwiches, eggs, soups, rice or potatoes
- Combine with fruits and vegetables
- Melt onto omelettes or into sauces

### **Tofu and soy beverages**

- Add to smoothies, soups and casseroles

### **Nut butters (like peanut, almond, cashew)**

- Spread on sandwiches, muffins, crackers, raw vegetables
- Add to ice cream and milkshakes

### **Nuts**

- Sprinkle on fruit slices, ice cream, cereals and salads
- Add to muffins, casseroles, bread recipes and hamburgers
- Snack on nuts throughout the day

### **Eating Tips**

- Eat small snacks during the day. This may be easier than eating a large meal.
- Bring food with you when you go out. You may not always find food easily when you are away from home.
- Speak to your registered dietitian about using nutrition supplements like Ensure™ or Boost™ to see if they are right for you. They can be used to add calories and protein to your diet.

## **High Calorie/High Protein Snack Ideas**

- Bagel and cream cheese or peanut butter
- Carnation Breakfast Essentials™ Ready-to-Drink
- Cereal and milk
- Cheese or hummus and crackers
- Congee with meat, fish or tofu
- Cooked egg on toast
- Cottage cheese or yogurt with fruit
- Granola or trail mix (dried fruit, nuts, seeds)
- Ice cream sprinkled with nuts or fruit
- Milk and cookies
- Milkshake or smoothie
- Peanut butter and jelly or banana sandwich
- Pizza (frozen mini, pizza pocket or slice)
- Pudding (tapioca or rice), custards
- Roti and dahl

## Helpful Resources at the Princess Margaret Patient & Family Library

- “Goes Down Easy: Recipes to help you cope with the challenge of eating during cancer treatment” cookbook
- “What to Eat When You Don’t Feel Like Eating” pamphlet
- “What to Eat When You Don’t Feel Like Eating” class

For more information about this session, check the Patient & Survivorship Education Calendar of Events available:

- online at [www.theprincessmargaret.ca](http://www.theprincessmargaret.ca), scroll down to “Classes & Activities” and click on “See calendar>”
- at the Patient & Family Library on the main floor of Princess Margaret



Attend a class in your language. You can book a medical interpreter for this class at no cost to you. To book, please call 416-581-8604. Five weekdays advance notice is needed.

**To search online for these and other helpful resources, go to [www.theprincessmargaret.ca](http://www.theprincessmargaret.ca):**

- Click on “Patients and Families” on the blue menu bar
- Scroll down and click on “Search the Library”