When Eating Right is a Real Jungle.....
Adding Calories & Protein in Your Diet
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Fitting meals and snacks into a busy schedule of medications, doctor’s visits and treatments can sometimes seem overwhelming. If eating itself is difficult your meals may become irregular.

While missing an occasional meal does not harm most people, it is important to remember that good nutrition can help you maintain your strength, immune system, and energy level. Patients who are well nourished:

- Better tolerate the side effects of chemotherapy, radiation, and other treatments or medications.
- Replace damaged tissues more rapidly.
- Recover from surgery more quickly, with better wound healing.
- Develop fewer infections or complications from treatments.
- Feel better, with a more positive approach to life.

**GOOD NUTRITION DOESN’T HAVE TO BE “HEALTHY”**

When most people are asked about what makes up a “healthy” diet, they mention many things: foods low in fat and sugar, lots of fresh fruits and vegetables, home-made foods, and variety in each meal.
Actually, whether a diet is healthy for you or not depends on several things:

- Your current nutritional status.
- What reasonable goals are for you, depending on the problems you have with eating.
- How much you are able to eat at one time without becoming nauseated.
- How many calories you need to maintain a healthy weight.
- How much energy you have to shop for food and fix meals.
- Whether you like or tolerate the foods you consider "healthy".

Good nutrition may result from very different diets for different groups of people, depending on the goals they are trying to reach. In fact, it may change month to month for the same person as he or she progresses through various stages of recovery from illness or treatment.

- Generally, it means eating foods every day that give you the calories and protein you need to run and repair your body. These foods should also provide the vitamins and minerals that help your body use the energy from your food, and build the new tissues that are needed to repair damaged tissues in the body.
• When possible, it is easiest to get this variety by eating many different kinds of foods. The “basic four” and the “food pyramid” say the same thing: fruits and vegetables, dairy products, breads and cereals, and protein foods make up a “balanced diet”.

• When eating is difficult, the information in this booklet will help you change your diet to get enough calories, your body’s first priority! When variety is limited, consider taking a multiple vitamin.

RETHINKING JUNK FOOD
WHEN BALANCE ISN’T EVERYTHING

Patients often admit that they find it difficult to eat the same way they did when they felt well. It is usually easier to eat convenience foods from fast food restaurants, or other foods they think of as “junk food”.

Actually, some of the foods that people think of as “junk food” can really be good for you. Ice cream, tacos, pizza, fried chicken, hamburgers and other sandwiches are quite nutritious. And they are quick and easy too! They all contain foods from the basic food groups, and you can feel comfortable eating them. Many fast food chains also have salads and juices available, and some new chains offer a wider variety of home-style foods, even vegetables!

The real problem for many patients is the fact that they cannot eat the amount of food they used to eat. Because
of this, they cannot continue to eat a “healthy” low-fat diet and get enough calories. Candy, cookies, soft drinks, chips, and other foods made primarily from fat or sugar are often considered “empty calories”. This means that the calories they provide do not have many other nutrients with them. For people with a normal appetite, this can lead to an unwanted weight gain. But for patients who have lost weight and need to gain it back, these foods can be important, since the calories are packed into a small volume.

Eating too many “empty calorie” foods may mean you are not hungry for other more nutritious foods. However, eating them along with other foods can help you get the nutrients you need and some extra calories too.

POOR APPETITE

Simply not being hungry can be a big reason that many people do not eat enough. It can be caused by many things: pain, illness, worry, or exhaustion. Some treatments can also result in the loss of feeling hungry.

Even when you don’t feel like it, it is important to try to eat well, and re-establish a normal eating pattern.
Try:

- Eating very small meals and snacks several times during the day. Eating more often, especially if you choose foods with more calories, can make up for the small amounts.

- Start out with small portions. It will prevent you from being overwhelmed by the work of eating, and make you feel successful when you manage to finish.

- Set a timer to help remind you to eat every couple hours.

- Keep a list of ideas on the refrigerator for those times when nothing comes to mind. Pick something that you think you can “tolerate”. Don’t expect to really want it.

- Variety is not important on these days! If only one thing appeals to you, eat it all day long if you wish.

- Drink liquids between meals to avoid getting filled up at mealtimes. High calorie drinks between meals is an easy way to include snacks.

- Keep snacks easily available on the table next to your bed or chair. Combine this with distracting activities, like television or friends, and you’ll be surprised at how much you may be able to eat.

- If solid foods are not possible, liquids can often make up for the missing calories. Milkshakes, cocoa, floats, chocolate milk, juices, sodas and soups can provide the calories you need.
• Exercise if you’re able, even if you are only able to walk down the block.

**TOO TIRED TO EAT?**

Exhaustion is a normal feeling when you are sick. It is a sign that your body is busy fighting off your illness. While rest is helpful, you cannot regain your energy when your body is not taking in foods that can provide it with that energy. In fact, when you do not take in enough calories, your body will draw on its reserves, including the protein reserves found in your muscle mass. Losing these reserves can seriously affect your strength.

Since it is difficult to cook when you are tired, some of the following suggestions may make meals a little easier:

• Try eating simple snacks for meals, but have them often: 5 - 6 times a day.

• Take advantage of convenience foods, like canned soups or frozen foods. Since *everyone* is busy these days, there are more choices at the supermarket. Try frozen pizzas, quiche, macaroni and cheese. . . spend some time in the frozen food aisle!

• Check pages 9 and 13 through 15, for ideas on using your microwave or blender to make quick meals or snacks, and for lists of foods to keep on hand for easy meals.
• Let family and friends help you by bringing in food. You can freeze the extra portions for later use. Don’t feel embarrassed to ask for help, since most people like doing things for others and are especially glad to know what will be truly helpful.

• When simply getting out of bed is difficult, arrange to have foods packed in a cooler beside your bed.

• Use delivery services: from the grocery store and restaurants, even fast food chains often have delivery with no or minimal charge.

• In Denver, try calling “Meals on Wheels”, a home meal delivery service: (720) 294-0111. If you’re in another county they can give you the correct number. This program is federally financed, requiring only a donation. But it usually has a waiting list. Or “Silver Service” may be available which also provides home meal delivery. There would probably not be a waiting list, but there is a charge of $4.50/meal. Ask your health care provider about other meal delivery services.

• Conserve your energy by using plastic/paper dishware that does not require washing.

When you’re too tired to eat....
• Take advantage of good days, and freeze meals in advance.

• Limit the low calorie foods and fluids you might be using: water, diet sodas, teas, coffee, and "lean" versions of foods. When it is difficult to eat, it is important to make the effort count.

MICROWAVE MAGIC
MAKING EATING EASY

Microwaves have really changed the way all of us cook. For the person with little time or energy they can be a real benefit. They speed up the cooking process and may dirty fewer dishes. If you do not have one, you may purchase them for less than $100.00. You could also consider borrowing one from a friend.

• Many frozen items are now available for the microwave. Frequently they cook in less than 1/3 of the time it would require in a conventional oven. You can find breakfast foods as well as lunch and dinner items.

• Baked potatoes can be fixed in about 8 minutes in a microwave, or an hour in the oven. This makes a great base to which you can add other foods and make a meal. You may want to try some of these ideas:

  * Grate cheese and add sour cream for a light meal.
* For more *spice* add canned chili, taco meat, or "sloppy-joe" mix and microwave again. Add cheese and sour cream for additional calories.

* Use canned cream soups as a sauce and add tuna or ham and microwave until hot.

- Sweet potatoes are great in the microwave too. Don’t forget the butter and brown sugar; or syrup, honey, or cinnamon.

- Quesadillas are tortillas with grated cheese, rolled up and warmed in the microwave for 30 - 60 seconds. They make quick snacks, and can be turned into burritos with canned beans or taco meat. Just add sour cream and hot sauce if you like.

- Mini-pizzas can be made with English Muffins, canned tomato or pizza sauce, cooked meat and cheese. Microwave until bubbly. Another version with tuna, sliced tomatoes and cheese is a nice change as well.

- Use leftovers by covering with plastic wrap or an upside down plate and warming. Several foods can be warmed together.

**WHEN THE CUPBOARD IS BARE.... BASIC SUPPLIES FOR QUICK MEALS**

Keeping your pantry and refrigerator stocked with basics will help in pulling together a quick meal or snack. . . fast! The next several pages include some of the things you should have available.
Refrigerator

- Hard-boiled eggs. These can be prepared in large quantities, and stored for up to a week. Store them unpeeled in a covered container in the refrigerator. Egg salad and deviled eggs are easy to make and well tolerated. Chopped egg is a great addition to baked potatoes and salads.
- Cheese, sliced and shredded.
- Sour cream and cream cheese.
- Chopped, cooked meats. These can be frozen in small amounts in freezer bags. They defrost quickly in the microwave or warm water and can be added to soups, baked potatoes, spaghetti sauce, chili or stews. Shredded and mixed with mayonnaise the meats become a sandwich spread. Canned fish, chicken, ham or turkey can be used in a similar way.
- Prepackaged puddings, custards, and yogurt.
- Milk, juice, sodas.
- Mayonnaise and condiments, margarine, butter, salad dressings.

Pantry

- Peanut butter and other nut butters. These are an easy source of calories and protein when spread on toast, celery, crackers, or added to milkshakes or hot cereals.
- Canned tuna or salmon. These can be used for sandwiches, mini-melts, or fried in patties with cracker crumbs and egg.
• Canned soups. These are a great base for making creamy sauces to pour over baked potatoes, rice or noodles.

• Canned beef stew, spaghetti, “sloppy-joe” mix, or chili.

• Canned pork and beans or baked beans. These are great mashed on toast, crackers or in tortillas. They can be added to baked potatoes or topped with cheese on their own.

• Boxes of macaroni and cheese, rice mixes, pasta mixes, scalloped or augratin potatoes. Extra cheese and/or meat can be added after cooking.

• Cold breakfast cereals. Add sliced fruit, dried fruits, and chopped nuts. Try half and half on top.

• Packets of instant hot cereals. Eat them alone, or stir in a package of vanilla instant breakfast and add fruit, brown sugar, syrup or honey.

• Instant hot chocolate, instant breakfast packets, or Scandishake™ powder.

• Condiments: Syrup, honey, brown sugar.

**Produce**

• Potatoes, squash, vegetables you like to eat (with dips, peanut butter, dressings, etc.).

• Fruits.

**Freezer**

• Pizza, potpies, quiche, dinners.
DRINKING YOUR CALORIES....
BLENDER OPTIONS

Whatever the reason for eating problems, many people find it easier to drink their calories than to eat solid foods. In fact, patients who refuse to drink anything but water often have the most difficulty keeping their calorie intake up. While there are many products on the market that will provide nutrition and help with weight gain, there are many homemade options as well.

- Carnation Instant Breakfast™ added to whole milk provides similar calories to canned formulas and may be preferred by patients who like dairy products.

- Scandishake™ powder can be added to juice as well. This makes a Julius™-type drink that is a pleasant change from milk-like drinks (145 calories/scoop or 440/package). Ask your health care provider for further information or call 1-800-950-8085.

Use the recipes that follow to make your own milkshakes, eggnog and other high calorie beverages. Use your imagination and high calorie versions of ice cream, yogurt, etc.!
MILKSHAKE BASICS:
1 cup vanilla ice cream
1 pkg. vanilla Carnation Instant Breakfast™ (CIB) or Scandishake™
4 oz. half and half

VARIETIES OR ADDITIONS
(To Add to Milkshake Basics)

Banana Nut: 1/2 tsp. black walnut extract
1/2 ripe banana
625+ calories, 15 grams protein

Peppermint: 1/2 - 1 tsp. peppermint extract
2 drops red food coloring
550+ calories, 15 grams protein

Coffee: 1 pkg. instant coffee, dissolved in
1 Tbsp. hot water
550+ calories, 15 grams protein

Chocolate Mint: Substitute chocolate CIB
1/2 tsp. mint/peppermint extract
550+ calories, 15 grams protein

Chocolate Almond: Substitute chocolate ice-cream
and CIB
1/2 tsp. almond extract
550+ calories, 15 grams protein

Peach Milkshake: 2 canned peach halves
625 calories, 15 grams protein
MILKSHAKES WITH A TART TWIST

Orange Frappe: 2 oz. each lemonade and orange juice
4 oz. half and half
1/2 cup orange sherbet
4 oz. canned apricots
570 calories, 6 grams protein

Lemon Flip: 4 oz. each buttermilk and lemonade
6 oz. vanilla ice-cream
565 calories, 20 grams protein

Raspberry Fluff: 8 oz. raspberry yogurt
4 oz. half and half
2 oz. cranberry juice
430 calories, 13 grams protein

COMMERCIAL SUPPLEMENTS

Canned nutritional supplements can be very convenient but they may be quite expensive as well. Compare prices at drug stores and larger grocery stores. It pays to shop. Your dietitian may also have coupons that can help with the cost.

- Try several brands of these supplements until you find one that you like. Your health care provider or dietitian may have samples to help you explore the options. Resource™, Ensure™, Boost™, Resource™ Fruit Beverage, and NuBasics™ are just some of the options. All are lactose free.
Two new products are available that include omega 3 fats. These may help increase appetite. Prosure 1-800-986-8502 or Resource 1-800-828-9194

Many people like to add flavorings to their supplements, whether commercial or instant breakfast varieties. This helps improve or vary their flavors. Most taste better when chilled or served over ice.

- Add a scoop of vanilla ice-cream and a cup of frozen strawberries or raspberries. Mix in a blender until smooth.
- Add 2 tablespoons of pudding, in the flavor of your choice, to vanilla supplements and stir.
- Mix a scoop of your favorite flavor of ice-cream in a vanilla supplement base.
- Stir in a small can of fruit nectar.
- Dissolve two spoons of instant coffee, flavored if you like, in a little boiling water and add to a can of vanilla liquid supplement. Stir well.
- Every manufacturer has recipe booklets with ideas on expanding the use of their products. Write them at the addresses on their labels, or talk to your dietitian.

**ADDING CALORIES TO FOODS YOU LIKE TO EAT**

It is always good to pack calories into the smallest amount of food possible. This is true whether you are losing weight or just trying not to while dealing with
problems that make eating difficult. While using extra fat and sugar may not seem "healthy", it’s important to look at this as a temporary period that requires extraordinary measures. *This is hardly a time you will suddenly learn to like foods you have never liked.* It is easier to add calories to foods you do like.

**MILK AND DAIRY**
- Milk is good alone, but increase the level of fat content. (If you usually drink 2% then try whole milk; if skim, try 2%.)
- Add Carnation Instant Breakfast™ (CIB)
- Make milkshakes

**EGGS**
- Mix grated cheese or cream cheese into scrambled eggs. This also softens the texture.
- Melt cheese on fried eggs.
- Try Eggs Benedict.
- Use extra mayonnaise in egg salad or deviled eggs.

**BREADS AND CEREALS**
- Add fruit, raisins, or nuts to cereals.
- Top with half and half, sugar, jelly, etc.
- Add CIB to hot cereal, top with syrup.
- Eat croissants, pastries.
- Top pancakes, French toast, or waffles with syrup or fruit and whipped cream.
• Enjoy fruit and nut breads with cream cheese.
• Top crackers with cheese or nut butters.

SALADS AND VEGETABLES
• Use regular rather than lowfat salad dressings.
• Top with cheese, meat, nuts, avocado, egg.
• Try high calorie dips or peanut butter on raw vegetables.
• Add margarine, cream or cheese sauces to cooked vegetables.

MEATS AND MAIN DISHES
• Bread and fry meats instead of baking or broiling.
• Add gravies.
• Mix nonfat dry milk into hamburger patties, meatloaf, or casseroles.
• Add extra cheese to pizza, macaroni and cheese, spaghetti, other casseroles.
• Add sour cream.
• Add mayonnaise, cheese, avocado, or bacon to sandwiches.

SOUPS AND STEWS
• Make soups with milk instead of water.
• Add chopped cooked meats.
• Top with cheese.
FRUITS, DESSERTS, AND SNACKS

- Add sour or whipped cream to fruit salads.
- Snack on dried fruit or add it to cereals.
- Spread peanut butter on fresh fruit.
- Fruit in heavy syrup has twice the calories.
- Enjoy your dessert with whipped cream or a la mode.
- Enjoy chips with dip.
- Nuts provide protein and great calories.

EXTRAS THAT COUNT!

- Butter 45 calories/teaspoon
- Sour Cream 70 calories/Tablespoon
- Whipped Cream 60 calories/Tablespoon
- Cheese 100 calories/ounce
- Cream Cheese 100 calories/ounce
- Mayonnaise 100 calories/Tablespoon
- Instant Breakfast™ 130 calories/package
- Scandishake™ 440 calories/package
- Avocado 55 calories per 1/6 medium
- Nuts 260 - 190 calories/ounce
- Peanut Butter 90 calories/Tablespoon
IDEAS FOR BETWEEN MEAL SNACKS

• Bagel and cream cheese
• Cheese and crackers
• Cheese toast
• Cinnamon toast
• Cottage cheese and fruit
• Cream cheese & nutbread
• Custard or pudding
• Deviled eggs
• Dried fruits
• Dry cereals and milk
• Egg salad sandwich
• Fruit pie ala mode
• Ice cream sundae
• Individual pizzas
• Peanut butter and crackers
• Peanut butter and jelly sandwich
• Frozen yogurt
• Milkshakes
• Milk and cookies
• Nachos and cheese
• Nuts and milk
• Poptarts™
• Quiche
• Quesadillas
• Root beer float
• Sherbet
• Tuna sandwich
• Waffles and syrup
• Yogurt & fruit
For further information contact Food and Nutrition Services at University of Colorado Hospital at 303-372-8077.

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