



Eating a high-protein, high-energy diet

Enhanced recovery after surgery program
(RAAC)

TO BETTER GUIDE YOU

**To improve your health,
you've been advised
to eat foods that are high
in protein. This handout
will help you do that.**

What's a protein-rich diet?

It's a way of eating that focuses on foods and drinks that contain a lot of protein. Each bite counts twice!

What does protein do?

Among other things, protein helps build and repair muscle and tissue, to heal wounds, to support your immune system, and to maintain muscle mass. It helps you stay strong and independent.

Why do I need to eat a protein-rich diet?

To help your body replenish its reserves and get strong again. This type of diet can be helpful in the following situations:

- Your body has increased needs due to surgery, infection, wounds or illness.
- You're losing weight or strength even though you're eating normally.
- You're eating less because of a lack of appetite.

Are there any contraindications?

A high-protein, high-energy diet may not be right for people who have kidney problems (ex. kidney failure). Ask your doctor or nutritionist whether this type of diet is right for you.

How can I increase the protein in my diet?

Make sure to eat 3 meals and 2 to 3 snacks a day. Try to include the following protein-rich foods and drinks as often as possible, based on your preferences.



For breakfast

- **1 cup (250 mL) of milk, soy milk, or chocolate milk.**
Add to coffee, cereal, or oatmeal.
- **2 eggs.** Cook them however you like!
- **3/4 cup (175 g) of yogurt** or **1/2 cup (125 g) of Greek yogurt.**
Eat plain or add cereal or fruit.
- **50 g (about 2 fingers' width) of cheese.**
Eat on toast, on its own, or in an omelet.
- **2 tbsp (30 mL) of creamy peanut butter.**
Spread on toast, muffins, bagels, or blend into a fruit smoothie.



For lunch and dinner

- **75 g (2 oz) of meat, poultry, fish, or seafood.**
Aim for a portion the size of your palm. Canned options work too!
- **2 eggs.** Add to salads, sandwiches, soups, or sauces.
- **3/4 cup (150 g) of tofu or tempeh.**
Add to soups, stews, salads, or tomato sauce.
- **50 g (1.5 oz) of cheese.** Use to top baked dishes or add to sauces, sandwiches, salads, mashed potatoes, or omelets.
- **1 tbsp (15 mL) of skim milk powder** (from the grocery store) or **protein powder** (from the pharmacy). Stir into prepared dishes.



For snacks

- **Try including** milk, chocolate milk, soy milk, yogurt, Greek yogurt, cheese, pudding, silken tofu, blancmange, creamy peanut butter or other nut butters, etc.

How to increase the energy in my diet?

Eat foods that are higher in fat content: whole milk (3.25%), yogurt with 4% fat or more, cheese with 30% fat or more, avocados, nuts, etc.

Add this to that:

Oil, butter, margarine	Pasta, soup, purées, milkshakes, vegetables
Cream, sour cream, mayo	Potatoes, meat, dips, poultry, sandwiches
Whipped cream, ice cream	Fruit, desserts, compotes, milkshakes
Syrup, honey, sugar, jam, molasses	Milkshake, yogurt, ice cream sandwiches, pancakes, cereal



Strawberry milkshake

Makes 1 serving (390 calories and 10 g of protein)

Ingrédients

- 1/2 cup (125 mL) whole milk (3.25% fat)
- 1/2 cup (125 mL) ice cream
- 1/4 cup (60 mL) strawberries
- 2 tbsp (30 mL) skim milk powder or protein powder
- 1 tbsp (15 mL) corn, canola, or camelina oil

Blend all ingredients in a mixer until smooth.

You switch up the recipe by replacing the strawberries with a ripe banana or 1 tbsp (15 mL) of chocolate syrup.

Can I eat legumes and nuts?

Yes, legumes, nuts, seeds, are great sources of protein. However, they can be harder to digest and may not be fit for people with certain digestive conditions.

Ask your doctor or your nutritionist if they're right for you. If so, introduce them to gradually avoid bloating and gas.

General tips, even if you have little appetite

- Eat several small meals and snacks each day.
- Drink less liquids before and after meals.
- Season your food to improve the flavour.
- Keep your favourite foods stocked.
- Eat at the times of the day you are hungry.
- Increase your appetite with light activity, like a short meal between meals.
- Make meals enjoyable, with soft music, setting a nice table, eating with friends, watching TV.

Can a nutrition supplement drink replace a meal?

Most nutritional supplements are not enough to replace a full meal. They can be used to complement meals or snacks.

Who can I talk to for help or questions?

A nutritionist can answer all your nutrition-related questions. Ask your doctor or nurse who to contact for a nutrition consultation:



Useful resources

- **Eating well when you have cancer.**
Canadian Cancer Society document, available for free at: cancer.ca/fr/cancer-information/resources/publications/eating-well-when-you-have-cancer
- **Meals-on-wheels**
Ask your local CLSC or contact the regroupement des popotes roulantes:
1-877-277-2722
popotes.org (French only)
- **Ordre professionnel des diététistes du Québec.**
To find a private dietician or nutritionist near you:
514-393-3733 or 1-888-393-8528 (toll-free)
opdq.org (French only)

Name: _____

Phone: _____



Questions

Text adapted from the health information sheet "Eating a high-protein, high-energy diet", developed by the health literacy centre at the CHUM: chumontreal.qc.ca/centre-litteratie-sante.