



High-protein, high-energy diet

Enhanced recovery after surgery program

TO BETTER GUIDE YOU

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

What is a high-protein diet?

A high-protein diet means eating more foods that nourish your muscles at every meal.

Protein helps your body repair tissues, keep your muscles strong, and restore your energy after an illness or surgery.

Examples of high-protein foods

Meat: chicken, turkey, beef, pork

Fish and seafood

Eggs

Dairy products: milk, yogurt, cheese

Legumes: lentils, beans, chickpeas

Nuts and seeds

Why is it important to eat enough protein?

To help your body rebuild its reserves and regain strength. Here are some situations where this diet can be helpful.

- Your body has increased needs because of surgery, an infection, a wound or illness.
- You are eating less because of a poor appetite.

Do you sometimes need to avoid eating more protein?

Yes. In some situations, you shouldn't eat too much protein. For example, if you have kidney problems, too much protein can make your kidneys work harder. Ask your doctor or nutritionist if this type of diet is right for you.

How to add protein to your diet?

Eat 3 meals and 2 to 3 snacks per day. Add protein-rich foods and drinks based on your preferences. Here are some examples:



For breakfast

- 250 mL (1 cup) of **milk, soy milk, or chocolate milk**. Add it to your coffee, cereal, or oatmeal.
- 2 **eggs**. Cook them any way you like!
- 175 g (3/4 cup) of **yogurt** or 125 g (1/2 cup) of **Greek yogurt**. Eat it plain or add cereal or fruit.
- 50 g (about two finger lengths) of **cheese**. Eat it on its own, with toast, or add it to omelettes.
- 30 mL (2 tbsp) of **creamy peanut butter**. Spread it on toast, muffins, bagels, or add it to a fruit smoothie.



For lunch or dinner

- 75 g (2 oz.) of **meat, poultry, fish or seafood**. Eat at least one portion about the size of the palm of your hand. Canned foods can be used.
- 2 **eggs**. Add to salads, sandwiches, in sauces, or soups.
- 150 g (3/4 cup) of **tofu or tempeh**. Add to soups, salads, stews, or tomato sauce.
- 50 g (1,5 oz.) of **cheese**. Use as a topping on your favourite baked dishes, or add to sauces, sandwiches, salads, in mashed potatoes, or omelettes.
- 15 ml (1 tbsp) of **skim milk powder** (from the grocery store) or protein powder (available at pharmacies, ask your pharmacist). Add it to prepared meals.



For snacks

- **Think about adding these foods:** milk, chocolate milk, soy milk, yogurt, Greek yogurt, cheese, pudding, silken tofu, blancmange, creamy peanut butter or nut butter.

How to add more high-energy foods?

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

Add these foods	To these foods
Oil, butter, margarine	+ Pasta, soup, puréed soup (potage), milkshakes, vegetables
Cream, sour cream, mayonnaise	+ Potatoes, meat, poultry, dips, sandwiches
Whipped cream, ice cream	+ Fruits, dessert, applesauce, milkshakes
Syrup, honey, sugar, jam, molasses	+ Milkshakes, yogurt, cookies, ice cream, pancakes, cereal



Strawberry milkshake

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

Ingredients

- 125 mL (½ cup) whole milk (3.25% milk fat)
- 125 mL (½ cup) ice cream
- 60 mL (¼ cup) strawberries
- 30 mL (2 tbsp) skim milk powder or high-protein milk powder
- 15 mL (1 tbsp) corn, canola, or camelina oil

Mix all ingredients together using a blender.

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

Can you eat legumes and nuts?

Legumes, nuts, and seeds are very good sources of protein. However, they can be hard to digest for some people. Ask your doctor or nutritionist if you can eat them.

If you want to add them to your meals, do it gradually to avoid side effects such as gas and bloating.

Tips if you have a poor appetite

- Have several small meals and snacks a day.
- Drink fewer drinks before and during meals.
- Season your food to improve the taste.
- Keep your favourite foods within reach.
- Eat at times of the day when you have the biggest appetite.
- Stimulate your appetite by doing a little exercise, like a short walk, before meals.
- Make mealtimes relaxing and enjoyable, with soft music, setting the table, friends or TV.
- Consider using a catering service or buying prepared meals.

Can a nutritional supplement drink replace a meal?

A nutritional supplement is a product that adds calories or protein to your diet. Most nutritional supplements are not enough to replace a complete meal. They can be used to complement a meal or as a snack.

Do you have questions or need advice?

A nutritionist can answer your questions about nutrition. Ask your doctor or nurse who you can contact to arrange a nutrition consultation

Name: _____

Tel.: _____



Useful resources

- **Meals on Wheels**
Ask your local CLSC or contact the Meals on Wheels network:
1-877-277-2722
popotes.org
- **Ordre professionnel des diététistes du Québec.**
To find a nutritionist in private practice near your home:
514-393-3733 ou
1-888-393-8528 (toll free)
opdq.org



Questions

Texte adapté de la fiche santé *Alimentation riche en protéines* produite par le Centre de littératie en santé du CHUM : chumontreal.qc.ca/centre-litteratie-sante.

