

Soft, Easy to Chew, High Energy, High Protein Nutrition Guidelines

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Soft, Easy to Chew, High Energy, High Protein Nutrition Guidelines

Good nutrition is very important. It will help you feel better and stay strong. Choosing high energy, high protein foods will help you get the nutrition you need to increase your energy levels, gain or maintain weight, heal, fight or prevent infections, and recover quicker from surgery or illness.

This guide will help you choose foods with more energy and protein that are soft and easy to chew.

Tips to help you eat better

- Make every bite count by choosing foods that are high in energy and protein. For example, choose cream soup over broth, or canned fruit in syrup over watermelon.
- Eat small meals and snacks often. Try to snack every 2 hours.
- Always have snack foods available so you can eat when you feel hungry.
- If your appetite changes during the day, try to eat your biggest meal when you feel the most hungry.
- Keep frozen, canned, or ready-to-use foods on hand for you when you do not feel like cooking.
- Let family and friends help you. They can shop for groceries or cook meals.
- Cook larger batches of food when you feel better. Freeze meals for times when you do not feel like cooking.
- Make meals more attractive by using brightly coloured foods and garnishes.
- Use drinks to add extra calories. Choose milk, smoothies, juice, or milkshakes over water, tea, coffee, or diet sodas.
- Include a serving of protein at each meal and snack.
- Improve your appetite by going for a short walk and enjoying the fresh air.
- Add extra sauces, gravies, cream, or fats to your food.
- Eat with family and friends to make meals more enjoyable.
- If you are not eating solid food, try for 8 cups of high energy, high protein liquids each day. Try whole milk, milkshakes, smoothies, or nutritional supplement drinks.

Tips if you have a sore mouth or throat

- Change the texture of foods to make them easier to chew and swallow. You can use a blender or food processor to chop, mince, mash, or purée. For easy clean up when puréeing food, try an immersion blender.
- To make sure meat is soft, start with foods that have ground meats (like meatloaf, shepherd's pie, tortière).
- Avoid rough, dry foods that can scratch and irritate your mouth or throat.
- Avoid very hot or very cold foods.
- Take your time eating.
- Drink through a straw to avoid irritating a sore mouth, unless using a straw makes you cough or clear your throat.
- Use extra sauces and gravies to moisten foods.
- Dip breads in sauces or gravies and use a lot of butter or margarine.
- Soak cold cereals in milk until they are soft.
- Dip cookies and cakes in milk or hot drinks to soften them. Try adding moisture with ice cream, frozen yogurt, soft fruit, pudding, or yogurt.
- Switch between food and liquids to help you swallow and keep your mouth moist.
- Avoid acidic and spicy food that can irritate your mouth or throat.

You may notice the taste of food has changed.

Tips to help food taste better

- Rinse your mouth before and after meals to help clear your taste buds.
- Try candy, mints, or chewing gum to help get rid of bad tastes.
- Cold foods have less taste and smell. If you find smells bother you, try eating foods cold. To make tastes and smells stronger, try eating foods hot.
- To improve taste, try smelling each bite for a few seconds before eating.
- To increase the flavour of foods, try eating a sour food (like sherbet or lemon soda) before meals if it does not cause discomfort.
- Try drinking liquids with meals to cover unpleasant tastes.
- Get rid of cooking smells by using an exhaust fan or cook on an outdoor grill.
- Keep your mouth clean and healthy by brushing and flossing regularly.

- Avoid foods that taste unpleasant. Focus on foods you enjoy. Try the unpleasant foods again in 2 weeks to see if the flavours have gotten better.
- Try new foods - you might find something that tastes good!

If food tastes:	Try:
Salty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adding sweet flavours (like cinnamon, fruit, or sugar). • Low-salt or low-sodium products.
Sweet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pinch of salt in puddings, ice cream, yogurts, and canned fruits. • Nutritional supplements with a coffee flavour. • Buttermilk instead of milk in smoothie recipes. • Adding acidity by using lemon, lime, and vinegar, as long as your mouth is not sore.
Bland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Switching between bites of foods that taste different during a meal. • Adding more salt, herbs, and spices, as long as your mouth is not sore. • Strong-flavoured foods (like spaghetti sauce, BBQ sauce, chocolate, pickles, and marinated meats).
Metallic or bitter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using glass pots and plastic utensils. • Fresh or frozen food instead of canned. • Marinating meats with fruit juice, vinegar, wine, or soy sauce. • Using lemon candies, mints, or gum after a meal, as long as your mouth is not sore. • Eating meat, fish, or poultry at room temperature or cold. • Eating less red meat, as it can taste more metallic than fish and chicken.

Tips if your mouth is very dry or if you have thick saliva

- Avoid dry, sticky foods (like crackers, peanut butter, dry mashed potatoes, or thick fudge and syrups).
- Take a sip of liquid after each bite of food.
- Moisten food with higher-fat foods (like gravies, margarine, butter, cream, and sauces).
- Limit caffeine and alcohol. They can make a dry mouth worse by causing dehydration (not having enough fluids).
- Try to drink 8 cups of non-caffeinated fluids each day.
- Slightly tart or carbonated (fizzy) drinks can help thin saliva.
- If nutritional supplements are too thick or creamy, try Boost® Fruit-Flavoured Non-creamy Nutrition Drink or add milk, water, or ice to thin.

When your mouth is dry, you are more likely to get infections and cavities. Follow these guidelines to help keep your mouth clean.

- Brush your teeth after every meal and before going to bed. Use a soft toothbrush rinsed in warm water.
- Rinse your mouth after brushing your teeth. **Do not** use mouthwash that contains alcohol, as it leads to dry mouth.
- For a sore mouth or throat, rinse and/or gargle 6 to 8 times a day with:
 - › ½ tsp baking soda and ½ tsp salt dissolved (mixed in until you cannot see it) in 2 cups of water

Protein

- Your body uses protein to build and repair cells, heal, build muscle, and fight infections.
- The main food sources of protein include meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy products, legumes (dried beans, peas, lentils), nuts, and soy.
- Eating protein from a wide variety of foods will also help you meet your nutrient needs for iron, zinc, vitamin B12, calcium, and vitamin D.

Good food sources of protein

Food	Serving size	Grams of protein (approximate)
Meat, fish, poultry, seafood, shellfish	½ cup (125 ml) or 2½ oz (75 g)	21 g
Firm tofu	¾ cup (175 ml) or 150 g	12 g
Egg	1 large	6 g
Cheese	1½ oz (50 g)	12 g
Cottage cheese	½ cup (125 ml)	13 g
Fortified soy drink	1 cup (250 ml)	7 to 8 g
Legumes, cooked	¾ cup (175 ml)	12 g
Milk (cow's)	1 cup (250 ml)	9 g
Yogurt or kefir	¾ cup (175 ml)	7 g
Greek yogurt	¾ cup (175 ml)	14 g
Peanut (or other nut) butters	2 tbsp (30 ml)	4 g
Nuts, seeds	¼ cup (60 ml)	3 to 8 g
Bread, 6-inch pita, naan bread, or paratha	1 slice	4 g
Cereal (cold)	¼ cup (30 g)	3 g
Cereal (hot)	¾ cup (175 ml)	4 g
Pasta, rice (cooked)	½ cup (125 ml)	3 g
Quinoa (cooked)	½ cup (125 ml)	4 g
Vegetables	1 cup (250 ml) of lettuce or ½ cup (125 ml) of other vegetables	2 g
	1 cup (250 ml) of green peas	8 g
Fruit	1 fruit or ½ cup (125 ml)	1 g

Ask your dietitian how many grams of protein you should try to eat each day.

For more information on portion sizes, visit:

› www.unlockfood.ca

Try these ideas to add protein

Food	How to use
Milk powder, soy milk powder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add to cold foods like milkshakes, yogurts, puddings, custards, or smoothies. • Add to hot foods like mashed potatoes, cooked cereals, cream soups and sauces, hot chocolate, casseroles, or curries. • Add to baked goods like pancakes, muffins, or biscuits. • Make 'double milk' by adding ½ cup (125 ml) of milk powder to 1 cup (250 ml) of your preferred milk drink.
Cheese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use grated or cut up in casseroles, curries, or salads. • Try soft cheeses like goat cheese, chèvre, or brie. • Melt on top of potatoes, eggs, pasta, cooked vegetables, and stews. • Eat with soft crackers, muffins, fruit, and breads. • Melt in sauces, dips, and soups.
Eggs, egg substitutes, pasteurized egg whites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add chopped or sliced into potato or tossed salads, sandwich fillings, or casseroles. • Use extra eggs when baking or cooking. • Beat into hot soups.
Nut or seed butters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add to muffin, cookie, pancake, or waffle mixes. • Spread on crackers and breads, fruit, or vegetables. • Stir into hot cereals, ice cream, yogurt, or milkshakes.
Nuts, seeds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sprinkle ground nuts or seeds on ice cream, yogurts, puddings, cereals, or stews. • Add ground nuts to muffin and cookie mixes, or ground meats.

Food	How to use
Legumes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add to casseroles, curries, soups, stews, salads, chili, dips, or spreads. • Spread hummus on soft bread or use as a dip.
Meat, fish, poultry, seafood, shellfish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add to casseroles, soups, pastas, salads, egg dishes, or rice. • Use ground meat to cut down on chewing. • Spread paté on breads and crackers.
Soy products (tofu, textured vegetable protein (TVP), soy beans/edamame, tempeh)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix silken-style tofu into smoothies, sauces, soups, or chowders. • Add to casseroles, curries, soups, and stews.
Wheat germ, ground flax	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sprinkle into yogurt or cereals. • Add to muffin, cookie, pancake, and other batters.

Energy

Energy, also known as calories, comes from carbohydrates, fat, and protein in food. You can increase your energy intake by choosing calorie-dense foods, eating more often, or eating larger portions.

Try these ideas to add more energy (calories)

Food	How to use
Fruit and vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add cream sauce, cheese, margarine, butter, and/or oil to soft, cooked vegetables. • Use avocado in sandwiches and dips. • Make fruit into crisps (like apple crisp) or cobblers and top with ice cream or whipped cream. • Choose fruit packed in syrup instead of water. • Add butter, margarine, heavy cream, or plain yogurt to mashed vegetables or potatoes.

Food	How to use
Grain products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spread butter or margarine on soft bread and muffins. • Use homogenized milk or Greek yogurt on cereal. • Add honey, brown sugar, or nut butters to hot cereal. • Add breadcrumbs, oatmeal, wheat germ, or ground flax to baking mixes, meatloaf, or hamburgers. • Use jams, jellies, honey, brown sugar, or syrup on cereals, French toast, pancakes, or waffles.
Meat and alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add gravies, sauces, or glazes to meat, poultry, and fish. • Mix mayonnaise with chopped chicken or fish to make sandwich filling. • Spread nut butters on soft breads. • Spread hummus on breads or use as a dip. • Use pesto sauce on fish or chicken. • Add ground nuts and seeds to yogurts, puddings, ice cream, baked goods, and cereals. • Choose high-calorie options, like fatty fish (salmon, trout, herring, mackerel) and chicken legs or thighs. • Use extra eggs when baking or cooking (even when using a baking mix).
Milk and alternatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add powdered milk to homogenized milk, yogurt, mashed potatoes, puddings, custards, sauces, gravies, smoothies, milkshakes, soups, batters, cereals, and hot drinks. • Choose yogurt and cheese made with a high percentage of fat. • Add whipped cream to fruit, puddings, ice cream, pies, Jell-O®, French toast, pancakes, waffles, and hot drinks. • Use cream or half-and-half instead of milk in recipes. • Add sweetened condensed milk to puddings and milkshakes.

Food	How to use
Vegetarian and vegan options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace the suggestions on the previous page with your preferred non-dairy alternative. • For non-dairy milk alternatives, choose ones that have at least 7 g of protein per cup (like soy or some cashew-almond blends). Check the label. • Try coconut milk in soups, puddings, smoothies, hot cereals, and hot drinks. • Try a vegan protein powder that has a blend of protein sources (like Vega® Plant-Based protein powder, Webber Naturals® 100% Natural Vegan Protein powder, Canadian Protein Vegan Protein Premium Blend). • Sperri™ Complete plant-based meal replacement is a vegan nutritional supplement drink made in Halifax. Visit www.sperri.ca to find out where you can buy it.

Nutritional supplements

- You may want to use nutritional supplements for extra energy and protein. These can help when you are not able to eat a full meal or are having trouble meeting your nutritional needs through food. They can also be used if you are having trouble chewing and need to have liquids.
- These drinks can meet all of your nutritional needs, if you drink the right amount.
- Most drugstores and grocery stores have nutritional supplement drinks, in brand names (like Boost®, Ensure®) and store brands (like Equate™, President's Choice®). Read the labels to find out which supplement is right for you.
- You can also buy protein and glucose powders (like Beneprotein®, Boost® Just Protein™, or Polycose® Glucose Polymer Module), which can be mixed easily with most foods and liquids.
- Talk to your dietitian about whether a nutritional supplement or protein powder is right for you.

High energy, high protein recipes

***For a non-dairy option:** Try using a non-dairy alternative instead of milk, ice cream, yogurt, or cheese. Try to use non-dairy milk substitutes with at least 7 g of protein per cup (like soy or cashew-almond blends). Check the label for protein content.

Instead of skim milk powder, try a soy or other vegan protein powder.

Chocolate Banana Peanut Butter Smoothie

1 cup (250 ml) Greek yogurt

1 cup (250 ml) vanilla ice cream

2 tbsp (30 ml) peanut butter

2 tbsp (30 ml) chocolate syrup

1 frozen banana

- Mix all ingredients together in a blender. Enjoy cold. Keep leftovers in the fridge or freezer.
 - › Makes: 2 servings
 - › Protein: 18 grams
 - › Energy: 450 calories

Pina Colada Smoothie

1 cup (250 ml) pineapple juice

1 cup (250 ml) whole milk (or nutritional supplement)

1 frozen banana

¼ cup (60 ml) frozen strawberries

2 tbsp (30 ml) skim milk powder

- Mix all ingredients together in a blender. Enjoy cold. Keep leftovers in the fridge or freezer.
 - › Makes: 2 servings
 - › Protein: 8 grams
 - › Energy: 200 calories

High Protein Egnog

½ cup (125 ml) eggnog

1 tbsp (15 ml) skim milk powder

¼ cup (60 ml) whole milk

Cinnamon and nutmeg (to taste)

- Mix all ingredients together in a blender. Add a tiny sprinkle of cinnamon or nutmeg on top, as desired. Enjoy cold. Keep leftovers in the fridge or freezer.
 - › Makes: 1 serving
 - › Protein: 16 grams
 - › Energy: 190 calories

Orange Pro Frost

½ cup (125 ml) orange juice

½ cup (125 ml) ice cream or sherbet

2 tbsp (30 ml) skim milk powder

- Mix all ingredients together in a blender. Enjoy cold. Keep leftovers in the fridge or freezer.
 - › Makes: 1 serving
 - › Protein: 8 grams
 - › Energy: 250 calories

Yogurt Smoothie

1 cup (250 ml) fruit (try bananas or canned peaches)

⅓ cup (80 ml) Greek, plain, or fruit yogurt

1 tbsp (15 ml) honey

1 cup (250 ml) whole milk (can add 2 tbsp [30 ml] skim milk powder)

2 ice cubes

- Mix all ingredients together in a blender. Enjoy cold. Keep leftovers in the fridge or freezer.
 - › Makes: 2 servings
 - › Protein: 8 grams
 - › Energy: 165 Calories

Tofu Shake

1 cup (250 ml) soy milk

1/3 cup (75 ml) soft tofu

1 tsp (5 ml) vanilla

1 cup (250 ml) soft fruit (try bananas or canned peaches)

- Mix all ingredients together in a blender. Enjoy cold. Keep leftovers in the fridge or freezer.
 - › Makes: 2 servings
 - › Energy: 135 Calories
 - › Protein: 8 grams

High Protein Oatmeal

1/3 cup (75 ml) quick-cooking rolled oats

2/3 cup (150 ml) whole milk

2 tbsp (30 ml) skim milk powder

- Place all ingredients in a microwave-safe bowl. Microwave for 90 seconds (1 1/2 minutes). Top with honey or maple syrup, cream, and/or soft fruits (like bananas or blueberries).
 - › Makes: 1 serving
 - › Energy (without toppings): 266 calories
 - › Protein (without toppings): 12 grams

Super Pudding

1 package (125 g) instant pudding mix

2 cups (500 ml) homogenized milk

2 tbsp (30 ml) vegetable oil

3/4 cup (175 ml) skim milk powder

- Mix all ingredients together well. Put in the fridge and leave until set. Enjoy with whipped cream.
 - › Makes: 4 servings
 - › Energy: 450 calories
 - › Protein: 17 grams

Macaroni and Cheese

3 cups (750 ml) cooked pasta, drained

¼ cup (60 ml) butter or margarine

1 tbsp (15 ml) flour

2 egg yolks, slightly beaten

1 cup (250 ml) grated cheese

¼ cup (60 ml) evaporated milk

¾ cup (175 ml) whole milk

¼ tsp salt

Pepper (to taste)

6 crackers (can also use ½ cup [250 ml] breadcrumbs)

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.
- Melt butter in a large pan. Stir in flour, egg yolks, salt, and pepper. Add milk, stirring often on low heat until sauce starts to thicken. Add grated cheese.
- Mix together sauce and cooked pasta, then place in a greased baking dish. Top with crackers and more grated cheese. Bake until bubbling.
 - › Makes: 4 servings
 - › Protein: 24 grams
 - › Energy: 454 calories

Sweet Potato Burritos

1 tbsp (15 ml) vegetable oil

1 onion, chopped

4 cloves garlic, minced

6 cups (1½ litres) kidney beans, rinsed and drained

2 cups (500 ml) water

3 tbsp (45 ml) chili powder

4 tsp (20 ml) mustard

2 tsp (10 ml) ground cumin

Pinch of cayenne pepper (to taste)

3 tbsp (45 ml) soy sauce

4 cups (1 litre) sweet potato, cooked and mashed

12 flour tortillas

1 cup (250 ml) shredded cheese

- Preheat oven to 350° F.
- Heat oil in a frying pan and sauté onion and garlic until soft. Mash beans into the onion mixture. Gradually stir in water, heating until warm. Remove from heat.
- Stir in soy sauce, chili powder, mustard, cumin, and cayenne.
- In each tortilla, add an equal amount of bean mixture and mashed sweet potatoes. Roll up tortillas and place on a baking sheet. Cover with cheese. Bake for 12 minutes.
 - › Makes: 6 servings (2 burritos each)
 - › Protein: 16 grams
 - › Energy: 478 calories

High energy, high protein meal ideas

Breakfast

- Scrambled eggs made with cream cheese
- Omelette made with soft cheese (like feta or goat cheese)
- Oatmeal, Cream of Wheat®, or rice cereal made with your preferred milk and mashed or puréed fruit (like blueberries, drained canned peaches, or bananas)
- Fruit smoothie with milk or protein powder
- Cottage cheese with soft fruit (like drained canned mandarin oranges)
- Yogurt (try Greek or Icelandic yogurt for more protein)
- Pureed or soft fruits (like bananas or canned peaches)

Lunch or supper

- Baked beans and fish cakes
- Creamy casseroles or pastas with a smooth sauce
- Minced stews
- Shepherd's pie (try adding gravy for more moisture)
- Meatloaf with mashed potatoes and soft-cooked vegetables
- Sandwich filling with full-fat mayonnaise (like egg, tuna, or salmon)
- Blended lentil soup with a spoonful of sour cream or plain Greek yogurt
- Cream soup with milk powder and a scoop of mashed potatoes
- Soft-cooked vegetables with butter, mashed or puréed
- Ground or minced meats, poultry, or fish:
 - › Ground meat or poultry with gravy or a smooth sauce
 - › Ground turkey with cranberry sauce
 - › Ground pork with applesauce
 - › Ground chicken or flaked fish with pesto or cream of mushroom soup

Snacks and desserts

- Applesauce (try flavours like blueberry or peach)
- Soft or puréed fruit
- Layered cake with custard and whipped cream
- Soft cake moistened with milk or cream
- Cottage cheese or smooth cheese (like Gay Lea® Nordica® Smooth cottage cheese product)
- Regular or Greek yogurt with soft fruit
- Pudding, custard, or mousse

This pamphlet is just a guide. If you have questions, please talk to your health care provider. We are here to help you.

