Make Every Bite Count

Increase your calorie and protein intake with quality foods.

What can I eat if my appetite is low?
When you are in treatment, it can be difficult to eat enough of the foods you need. You might be nauseous, feel full quickly, have difficulty swallowing, or have a low appetite. There are many ways to increase your calories without feeling overwhelmed by the amount of food you need to eat.

Why is eating important now?
You need to nourish healthy cells with nutrients to help your body fight cancer. Your nutritional requirements, including calorie and protein needs, may actually increase as a result of your cancer and/or your cancer treatment. In order to maintain not just your weight, but your muscle mass, and your vitamin and mineral levels, it is important to get enough calories in your diet. Here are some high-calorie whole food suggestions:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Serving</th>
<th>Calories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Avocados</td>
<td>¼ medium</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Butter</td>
<td>1 tablespoon</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coconut milk</td>
<td>½ cup</td>
<td>275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cream cheese</td>
<td>2 tablespoons</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dates</td>
<td>¼ cup</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eggs</td>
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<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapeseed oil</td>
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<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hummus</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayonnaise</td>
<td>2 tablespoons</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuts/seeds</td>
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<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olive oil</td>
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<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olives</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peanut butter</td>
<td>2 tablespoons</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pesto</td>
<td>2 tablespoons</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tahini</td>
<td>2 tablespoons</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What are some other food suggestions?
Fats, Condiments, Spreads:
• Canned coconut milk: 3 times as many calories as whole milk.
• Avocados: 1 avocado has twice as many calories as whole milk and has healthy fats.
• Olive oil: Cook with, use in salads, and drizzle over vegetables, pasta, grains, and meats.
• Olives: Eat alone or add to salads, pasta, vegetables, and casseroles.
• Butter: Melt on vegetables or hot cereals. Mix with herbs to put on meat or seafood dishes.
• Peanut butter or other nut butters: Spread on bread, eat with fruit, mix into smoothies, use in sauce.
• Tahini (ground sesame seeds): Mix with water, lemon juice, and salt and drizzle on salads or roasted vegetables.

Vegetables and Fruit:
• Juice, nectars and fruits: Blend into shakes.
• Dried fruits: Combine with salads and cooked vegetables, add to hot or cold cereal, eat as a snack.
• Fruits: Add cream, half-and-half, whole milk or maple syrup to fresh, canned, or frozen fruits.
• Vegetables: Mix butter or cheese with vegetables before serving or while baking/cooking.

Meat, Eggs, Legumes
• Beef, chicken, pork, fish: Chop or puree into soups, scrambled eggs, vegetables, baked potatoes, salads and casseroles, or deviled as a sandwich spread.
• Eggs: Try hard boiling to crumble over salads, vegetables, or casseroles; eat deviled eggs or egg custards as a snack.
• Beans or dried peas: Add canned beans to salads or soups. Use hummus in a sandwich, on a cracker or with some vegetables. Or, just eat a handful of beans or a spoonful of a bean dip.

Dairy
• Whole milk: Add calories to whole milk by mixing in half-and-half or instant dry milk powder (3 tablespoons= 90 calories). Add to smoothies/shakes or use in cooking.
• Ice cream, sorbets: Make sundaes, milkshakes, or ice cream cookie sandwiches.
• Whole milk yogurt: Use fruit-flavored yogurt on pancakes or waffles, on cereal, or as a fruit dip.
• Cheese: Sprinkle parmesan or grated cheese on salads; melt on vegetables, toast, sandwiches, soups or casseroles.
• Cottage cheese: Add to casseroles and scrambled eggs, or stuff in pasta shells.
What if I don’t want to cook?

- **Canned or boxed soup**: Blenderize if soup is too thick, or you can thin down with broth. Try adding extra nutrients/calories with frozen vegetables, beans, potatoes, pasta, finely chopped meat/chicken, olive oil or additional milk for a cream based soup.
- **Sauces**: Add sauces to pastas and vegetables. There are many sauces available in the grocery store aisles, like alfredo sauce, that can add 125 calories in ½ cup. Other sauces include cheese, peanut, curry, creamy tomato and pesto.
- **Frozen entrées**: Shepherd’s pie, pot pies, quiches and other casserole-type dishes are high-calorie meals in small packages. Most of these are soft and easy to swallow.
- **Pudding/yogurt**: Use coconut milk in place of milk to make a container of pudding. Add canned fruit to yogurt.
- **Prepared smoothies**: Many smoothies can be found at your local grocery store if you do not want to mix your own. Make sure they are pasteurized if you are neutropenic.
- **Peanut butter and jelly**: There are 380 calories in this classic sandwich. Try using almond butter or cashew butter for an alternative. Put in some sliced banana for some added nutrients!

Recipes

**Coconut Milk Rice Pudding**

- 16 oz can coconut milk (not lite)
- 1 ½ cups cooked rice (brown or white)
- Sweetener to taste (suggestions: honey, maple syrup, agave syrup, etc.)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Heat the coconut milk in a saucepot, over medium heat, until it comes to a simmer. Add sweetener and stir until dissolved. Add the cooked rice and heat through. Simmer until it thickens but don’t allow it to become too dry; the rice will continue to absorb the milk as it cools. Take off heat and stir in the vanilla. Serve warm or chilled.
- Makes 4 (1/2 cup) servings; 350 calories, 4 grams protein, 1 gram of fiber (white rice) per serving.

**Black Bean Sandwich Spread**

- 2 cups cooked black beans
- ½ cup olive oil
- juice of 1 large lime
- 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional)
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder salt or fresh minced garlic pepper to taste
- In a food processor or blender, add the beans and pulse until well chopped up. Turn food processor on to run continuously and slowly drizzle in olive oil. Add spices and lime juice and blend well. Taste and adjust salt and pepper to suit. Process about two minutes or until the spread is smooth.
- Makes 4 (1/2 cup) servings; 360 calories, 8 grams protein, 8 grams fiber per serving.
Carrot and Cashew Soup

- 2 pounds carrots, peeled and roughly chopped
- 4 cups stock or water
- 1 ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 medium potato, scrubbed and roughly chopped
- 3-4 tablespoons butter
- 1 cup onion, chopped
- 1-2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 teaspoon ginger, grated
- ¼ cup cashews, chopped
- ⅓ cup sour cream

Place carrots, liquid, salt and potato into a soup pot and bring to a boil. Cover and simmer for 12 to 15 minutes. Let it cool to room temperature. Sauté the onion, garlic, and nuts with a pinch of salt in the butter until the onions are clear. Stir in the ginger and cook for another minute. Puree everything together in a blender until smooth and reheat until warm. Adjust seasoning. Garnish with a tablespoon of the sour cream.

Makes 4 (1 cup) servings; 410 calories, 7 grams protein, 8 grams fiber per serving

What types of beverages should I drink?

There are many times when drinking a snack is much more appealing than sitting down for another meal. Liquids may be easier to swallow or soothing to a sore throat. Making your own drink will give you more nutrition since whole foods, or plant foods, are packed with the benefits of phytonutrients. Making drinks at home is also less expensive than buying pre-made beverages.

Smoothies

Smoothies are a delicious way to increase the calories, protein, and other nutrients in your diet. Experiment with the combinations we’ve suggested below or make your own mix using the ingredient list below. For more calories, try adding a tablespoon of one of the oils or nut/seed butters.

- Directions: Combine all ingredients in a blender, blend until smooth. You may need to adjust liquid amounts for desired consistency. Hint: add powdered ingredients while blending to prevent clumping and sticking to the sides of the blender.
- Rice milk: If using rice milk, freeze the milk in ice cube trays two hours before making smoothie.
- Ground flax seeds: Use a coffee or spice grinder to grind whole flax seeds into a smooth flax seed meal. Flax seeds are high in fiber and omega-3 fatty acids. Do not eat raw flax seeds if you are immunosuppressed.

The Basic Smoothie
1 banana
1 cup frozen fruit
8 oz plain yogurt
300 calories; 14 grams protein; 6 grams fiber

Strawberry Smoothie
4-6 large strawberries
6 oz plain yogurt
½ cup orange juice
1 tablespoon tahini (ground sesame seeds)
1 medium sized banana
440 calories; 15 grams protein; 7 grams fiber
(Continued)
½ teaspoon vanilla
½ tablespoon honey
Chunky Monkey
1 banana
1 tablespoon chocolate syrup
2 tablespoons peanut butter or almond butter
1 cup any milk (milk, soy milk, rice milk)
1 cup crushed ice
510 calories; 14 grams protein; 5 grams fiber

Date Shake
3 cups rice milk
3-5 large dates, pits removed
1 tablespoon almond or peanut butter
¼ cup wheat germ*
2 tablespoons ground flax seeds*
Soak dates in 1 cup of warm water until they soften. Drain water from dates and combine with all other ingredients in a blender.
420 calories; 9 grams protein; 7 grams fiber

Berry Smoothie
½ cup frozen berries
1 medium banana
1 cup orange juice
2 tablespoons whey, soy or rice protein powder
1 cup rice milk (freeze ahead of time)
440 calories; 13 grams protein; 6 grams fiber

Groovy Green Smoothie
1 banana, cut in chunks
1 cup grapes
1 (6 ounce) tub vanilla yogurt
½ apple, cored and chopped
1 ½ cups fresh spinach leaves
400 calories; 12 grams protein; 7 grams fiber

Super Protein Smoothie
½ cup plain yogurt or soy yogurt
2 tablespoons whey protein powder
1 tablespoon peanut butter or almond butter
1 tablespoon canola oil
1 banana
1 cup any milk (milk, soy milk, rice milk)
1 tablespoon finely ground flaxseeds*
690 calories; 37 grams protein; 6 grams fiber

Fruit & Veggie Smoothie
8 oz plain yogurt
1 cup frozen fruit
1 cup frozen spinach
1 tablespoon psyllium husk powder
1 tablespoon nutritional yeast*
340 calories; 23 grams protein; 17 grams fiber

*Avoid these food items if immunosuppressed.
Ingredient List
Mix and match ingredients from these columns to create a nutritious and delicious smoothie. Additionally, crushed ice can be added if a colder smoothie is desired.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
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<th>Calories</th>
<th>Protein (grams)</th>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yogurt (whole milk)</td>
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<td>Yogurt (low-fat)</td>
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<td>Kefir</td>
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<td>Soy yogurt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whole milk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whey protein powder</td>
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<td>Rice protein powder</td>
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<td><strong>Fats</strong></td>
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<td>Psyllium husk powder</td>
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*Avoid these food items if immunosuppressed.

This education resource was intended to be given as a part of a nutrition consult by an SCCA dietitian. Questions? Ask an SCCA dietitian at nutrition@seattlecca.org.