**Make Every Bite Count**

**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 increase as a result of having cancer and/or your cancer treatment. In order to maintain your weight, muscle mass, and vitamin and mineral levels, it is important to get enough calories in your diet. Here are some high-calorie whole food suggestions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>Serving size</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>Canned coconut milk</td>
<td>1/3 cup</td>
<td>140</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>
<td>1 egg</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grapeseed oil</td>
<td>1 tablespoon</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grated cheese</td>
<td>2 tablespoons</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hummus</td>
<td>2 tablespoons</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayonnaise</td>
<td>2 tablespoons</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuts/seeds</td>
<td>2 tablespoons</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olive oil</td>
<td>2 tablespoons</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olives</td>
<td>5 olives</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 to increase calories?

**Fats, condiments, spreads:**
- Canned coconut milk: 1 cup has twice as many calories as whole milk; add to soups and smoothies.
- Avocados: Add to toast, soups and smoothies.
- Olive oil: Cook with, use on 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, or use in sauce.
- Tahini (ground sesame seeds): Mix with water, lemon juice, and salt; drizzle on salads or roasted vegetables.

**Vegetables and fruit:**
- Juice, nectars and fruits: Blend into shakes or smoothies.
- Dried fruits: Add to salads, cooked vegetables, hot or cold cereal, or 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 and add into soups, scrambled eggs, vegetables, baked potatoes, salads and casseroles.
- 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 beans to salads or soups. Use hummus in a sandwich, on a cracker or with some vegetables.

**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, waffles, cereal, or as a fruit dip.
- Cheese: Sprinkle cheese on salads, vegetables, toast, sandwiches, soups or casseroles.
- Cottage cheese: Add to casseroles, scrambled eggs, or stuff in pasta shells.

**What if I don’t want to cook?**
- **Canned or boxed soup**: 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 or 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. Put in some sliced banana for some added nutrients!

• **Try a tuna, egg, or chicken salad sandwich.**

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**Recipes**

**Coconut Milk Rice Pudding**

- 16 oz can coconut milk (not light)
- 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; 250 calories, 2 grams protein, 1 gram of fiber (white rice) per serving.

**The Basic Smoothie**

- 1 banana
- 1 cup frozen fruit
- 8 oz plain yogurt

Directions: combine ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth. Makes one serving: 300 calories; 14 grams protein; 6 grams fiber

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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.