You’ve been told you need to eat protein-rich foods to boost your energy and improve your state of health. Here are some suggestions.

**What does it mean to eat foods that are protein-rich and energy-dense?**
A protein-rich diet puts the accent on food and beverages with a high concentration of protein and calories for energy. Make every mouthful really count!

**What role does protein play?**
Among other things, protein helps build and repair muscles and tissues, heal wounds, and support your immune system. Protein helps you stay strong and independent.

**What does energy mean?**
The energy found in food fuels your body the same way that gas fuels your car. It’s what helps you keep moving and stay active. Energy is measured in calories.

**Why do I need to eat a protein-rich, energy-dense diet?**
Eating this way can help your body build back its reserves and get strong again. Here are some situations in which this type of diet could help you.

> You’re eating normally, but you’re losing weight or feeling weaker.
> You’re eating less because you’re just not hungry.
> Your body needs more energy to recover from surgery, an infection, a wound, or illness.
How can I add more protein to my diet?

Here are some protein-rich foods and beverages. Include them in your meals and snacks as often as you can.

**Breakfast**
- Milk or chocolate milk. Add to your coffee, cereal, or oatmeal.
- Eggs – cooked your favourite way!
- Yogurt or Greek yogurt. Eat it plain or add nuts, cereal, or fruit.
- Cheese. Have a piece of cheese alone or with toast, or add to an omelette.
- Peanut butter. Spread on your toast, muffins, or bagels. Or put some in a smoothie.
- Nuts. Add to your yogurt, cereal, or oatmeal.

**Lunch and dinner**
- Meat, poultry, fish, and seafood. Eat a healthy portion, at least the size of your palm. Canned fish is fine.
- Eggs. Add to your salads, sandwiches, in sauces or soups.
- Tofu and legumes. Add to your soups, salads, stews, or tomato sauce.
- Cheese. Add grated cheese to your favourite dishes, sauces, sandwiches, salads, mashed potatoes, omelettes, etc.

**Snacks**
- Remember to include milk, chocolate milk, yogurt, Greek yogurt, cheese, pudding, nuts, etc.

How can I make sure I’m eating energy-dense foods?

- Eat foods with a higher percentage of fat: whole milk (3.25%), 4% yogurt, cheese with at least 30% fat, etc.
- Add these foods to your meals and recipes: oil, butter, margarine, cream, mayonnaise, sour cream.
- Add one or more of these foods to your desserts: whipped cream, ice cream, syrup, honey, sugar, jam.

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### Strawberry milkshake

For one serving

- 390 calories
- 10 grams of protein

**Ingredients**

- 125 ml (1/2 cup) whole milk (3.25%)
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) ice cream
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) strawberries
- 30 ml (2 tablespoons) skim milk powder
- 15 ml (1 c. tablespoons) corn oil

Blend all ingredients with a mixer.

For variety, use a ripe banana or 15 ml (1 tablespoon) of chocolate syrup instead of strawberries.
Eating protein-rich, energy-dense foods

Some helpful ideas – even if you really don’t feel much like eating

> Have several small meals and snacks every day.
> Don’t drink too much liquid before or during meals.
> Seasoning makes food more tasty and appealing.
> Keep your favourite foods close at hand.
> Eat at the time of day when you have the most appetite.
> To stimulate your appetite, take a little exercise, such as a short walk, before meals.
> Make mealtime pleasant, with soft music, a nicely set table, friends to keep you company, TV, etc.
> Take a store-bought nutritional meal supplement, e.g. Ensure, Boost, etc. – or make your own (see milkshake recipe on page 2). You can buy nutrition supplements at most drugstores and big grocery stores. Foods that are labelled “higher in calories” are enriched – put them at the top of your list.
> To boost the protein content of your food, add skim milk powder, finely ground nuts (e.g. ground almonds), or protein powder from the drugstore.

Can a bottle of nutritional supplement really replace a meal?

Most of the nutritional supplements on the market are not sufficient to replace a full meal. They’re fine as a snack or for “topping up” a meal.

What should I do if I’m too tired to prepare meals?

> Ask someone to help you.
> Cook simple meals in bulk and freeze individual portions.
> Buy prepared foods. You can order online from some grocery stores and have them delivered. You can also get food from a catering service or Meals on Wheels (see list on page 4).

If I have diabetes or high cholesterol, can I still eat foods that are protein-rich and energy-dense?

An enriched diet won’t cause problems as long as it’s temporary. It’s extremely important to keep your strength up and build your energy, especially when you’re feeling unwell or stressed.

Should I avoid dairy products if I’m lactose-intolerant?

Some dairy products, such as cheese and yogurt, contain low levels of lactose. Most people who are lactose-intolerant have no problem with these foods. Or you can drink lactose-free milk instead of regular milk.
Who can I ask for help or answers to my questions?

A nutritionist can answer all your questions on what to eat. Ask your doctor or nurse for a referral to a nutritionist.

Name: ____________________________________________________________

Phone: ____________________________________________________________

USEFUL RESOURCES

Eating Well When You Have Cancer, produced by the Canadian Cancer Society, 2016:
> cancer.ca
Support & services → Publications

To sign up for Meals on Wheels:
> gouv.qc.ca
Enter Meals on Wheels in the search engine

Dietitians of Canada
To find a private-practice dietitian in your community:
> dietitians.ca
Your Health → Find a Dietitian

Other health sheets published by the CHUM are available. Ask for those that might fit your situation.

You can also find them on our web site
chumontreal.qc.ca/votresante

The content of this document in no way replaces the recommendations and diagnoses made, or the treatment suggested by your health professional.

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