

Eating a protein-rich, energy-dense diet



To improve your health, you've been advised to eat protein-rich and energy-dense foods. This fact sheet will help you to follow that advice.

What is a protein-rich, energy-dense diet?

It's a diet focused on foods and beverages with a high concentration of protein and energy. Every bite should be as nutritious as possible!

What role does protein play and why is it important?

Among other things, protein helps build and repair muscle and tissue, heal wounds, and support your immune system. Protein helps you stay strong and independent.

What is energy?

The energy found in food fuels your body, much like gas fuels your car. It's what helps you move and do things. Energy is measured in calories.

Why do I need to eat a protein-rich, energy-dense diet?

This type of diet can help your body replenish 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 getting weaker.
- > You're eating less because you've lost your appetite.
- > Your body needs more energy to recover from surgery, an infection, a wound, or illness.





How can I add more protein to my diet?

It's important to spread the amount of protein you take in over the course of the day. This will allow your body to use it more effectively.

Here are some protein-rich foods and beverages to include in your 3 meals and snacks.

Breakfast	
Milk, chocolate milk, high-protein milk, and soy, pea, or chickpea beverages	Put some in your coffee, cereal, oatmeal, or milkshake. 
Eggs	Cook them any way you like!
High-protein yogurt, such as Greek yogurt or skyr	Add nuts, cereal, or fruit. 
Cheese	Have some on its own or with toast, or add to an omelette.
Peanut or other nut butters (almond, cashew)	Spread on toast, muffins, or bagels, or add some to a fruit shake (smoothie). 
Nuts and seeds	Add some to your yogurt, cereal, oatmeal or milkshake.

Lunch and dinner	
Fish, poultry, seafood, and meat	Eat at least one portion the size of your palm. Feel free to use canned versions.
Eggs	Use in salads or sandwiches, add to sauces or soups. 
Legumes	Add to soups, salads, stews, or tomato sauce.
Tofu and tempeh	Add to soups, desserts, spaghetti sauce, stews, stir fries, and salads.
Cheese	Melt cheese over your favourite dishes, or add to sauces, sandwiches, salads, mashed potatoes, omelettes, etc. 
Textured vegetable protein - TVP, (e.g., meatless soy-based product)	Good substitute for meat in your recipes.



In your snacks, consider including foods such as milk, chocolate milk, yogurt, Greek yogurt, cheese, pudding, nuts, etc.

How can I eat more energy-dense foods?

Eat foods with a higher fat percentage: whole milk (3.25%), yogurt with 4% fat or more, cheese with 30% fat or more, avocados, nuts, etc.

Add this...	...to this
Oil, butter, margarine	Pasta, soup, milkshake, vegetables
Cream, sour cream, mayonnaise	Potatoes, meat, dips, poultry, sandwiches
Whipped cream, ice cream	Fruit, dessert, compote, milkshake
Syrup, honey, sugar, jam, molasses	Milkshake, yogurt, ice cream, pancakes, cereal, cookies



Strawberry milkshake

For one serving

- 390 calories
- 10 grams of protein

Ingredients

- 125 ml (1/2 cup) whole milk (3.25% fat)
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) ice cream
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) strawberries
- 30 ml (2 tablespoons) skim milk powder or high-protein milk
- 15 ml (1 c. tablespoons) corn, canola, or camelina oil

Mix all ingredients together in an electric blender.

For variety, use a ripe banana or 15 ml (1 tablespoon) of chocolate syrup instead of strawberries.

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

- > Have several small meals and snacks every day.
- > Drink less liquid before and during meals.
- > Season your foods to improve the taste.
- > Keep your favourite foods on hand.
- > Eat at those times in the day when you have the most appetite.
- > Supplement meals with a commercial nutritional product (such as Ensure or Boost), or a homemade milkshake (see recipe above). Nutritional supplements are available at most pharmacies and some grocery and big-box stores. Those labeled “Plus Calories” are even richer than the others. Go for those.

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 or as a snack.

.....

.....

.....

What if I'm too tired to prepare meals?



- > Ask someone to help you.
- > Cook simple meals in bulk and freeze individual portions.
- > Get prepared meals. You can buy them at the grocery store (some offer online shopping and will deliver). You can also use a catering service or a meals-on-wheels program (see Useful Resources, page 4).

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

An enriched diet won't cause problems as long as it's temporary. It's very important to keep up your strength and your energy, especially when you're sick or stressed.

If you have diabetes, follow a high-fat diet rather than a high-sugar diet. If you have high cholesterol, choose better fats, such as olive oil, canola oil, avocado, nuts, and non-hydrogenated margarine.

If you have questions about your state of health, discuss them with your nutritionist to get advice tailored to your situation.

Who can I contact for help or to ask question?

A nutritionist can answer all your questions about eating. Ask your doctor or nurse for a referral to a nutritionist.

Name:

Phone:



USEFUL RESOURCES

Meals-on-wheels: Contact your neighbourhood CLSC or call the Regroupement des popotes roulantes at 1 877 277-2722.

> popotes.org [French only]

Ordre des diététistes-nutritionnistes du Québec (ODNQ). To find a nutritionist in the private sector, near your home:

> **514 393-3733** or **1 888 393-8528** (toll-free)

> odnq.org [French only]

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



You can also find them on our website

chumontreal.qc.ca/fiches-sante

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

To find out more about the Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal
chumontreal.qc.ca