

Nutrition Matters

Nutrition Services, Community and Health Services

Boosting your weight

Contrary to popular belief, gaining weight for some can be as difficult as losing weight for others. Some people believe that in order to gain weight they must simply exercise less and eat more of everything and anything. This can lead to unhealthy weight gain.

If you are underweight or have a poor appetite, you should contact your doctor to see if there is a medical reason for any sudden weight loss or poor appetite.

Making changes to your meal plan by eating a well-balanced, high energy diet based on Canada's Food Guide, can promote better nutrition, make eating more enjoyable and may help boost your weight. The aim is to gain weight gradually. A reasonable goal is 0.5-1kg (1-2 lbs) per week.

For those with a small appetite:

- ◆ Eat your biggest meal when your appetite is best
- ◆ Make a list of foods you enjoy so you can include them on your grocery list
- ◆ Choose meals and snacks that take little preparation. Make use of ready-to-serve meals, either store bought or home-made foods stored in individual servings
- ◆ Avoid acidic, very hot/cold, spicy or salty foods, and alcohol if they cause you discomfort
- ◆ Enjoy your meals in a relaxed, pleasant atmosphere with people you enjoy. Avoid the stress of family arguments at mealtimes. Why not turn on some music and enjoy?

Take note of these meal-planning tips:

- ◆ If it is difficult for you to eat 3 larger meals daily, eat 6 or 7 smaller meals or snacks throughout the day.
- ◆ Space snacks far enough apart from meals so that they do not interfere with your appetite at mealtimes.
- ◆ Never skip meals. Make sure breakfast is part of your morning routine. Plan meals at regular times.
- ◆ Choose from the upper range of servings from Canada's Food Guide. It is important to increase your eating by choosing foods that are "nutrient-dense". This term refers to foods that are good sources of nutrients as well as energy (calories). See other side for examples.



Foods to try for meals and snacks:

- ◆ Dried fruit, nuts, seeds and granola (see recipe)
- ◆ Crackers and sandwiches with filling such as: tuna, meat, eggs, cheese or peanut butter
- ◆ Fast foods such as pizza, tacos, falafels and submarines
- ◆ Bagels or fruit slices with cheese
- ◆ French toast or pancakes with fresh fruit and yogurt
- ◆ Yogurt with fresh fruit and nuts
- ◆ Muffin and cheese
- ◆ Double strength milk (1 cup fluid milk & ¼ cup skim milk powder)
- ◆ Croutons, grated cheese, and legumes like beans, chick peas or lentils in salads
- ◆ Meat, fish, poultry, tofu or legumes (beans, chick peas, lentils)

Granola

5 cups	rolled oats
½ cup	wheat germ
1 cup	chopped nuts, any kind
½ cup	shredded coconut
½ cup	seeds, any kind
½ cup	powdered skim milk
½ cup	vegetable oil
½ cup	brown sugar or honey

Mix together and spread in a shallow pan and bake 40 minutes at 300°F. Stir occasionally while baking. Add raisins and chopped dried fruit for added breakfast appeal.

Store in an airtight container.

Foods such as coffee, tea, pop, clear soups, or broth have relatively low nutrient content, so have these less often. Instead, choose milk, milkshakes, or juices to drink.

Milkshake

Makes 500mL (2 cups)

1/3 cup	soft or firm tofu
2 tbsp	sugar or pasteurized honey
½ cup	yogurt
1 cup	milk
¼ cup	skim milk powder
1	ripe banana

In a blender combine all ingredients and blend thoroughly until smooth.

Variations:

- ◆ Replace the tofu with 1/3 cup cottage cheese
- ◆ Replace banana with other fruits (e.g., 1 cup strawberries)
- ◆ Add extra flavours: 2 tbsp cocoa powder or 1 tsp vanilla extract.

The tofu in this recipe will take on the taste of whatever flavouring is added to your shake. It will also provide you with some nutrients, such as iron, calcium and protein, which may be lacking in your diet if you are eating very little food.

Nutrient-dense foods for your grocery list

- ◆ Nuts and seeds (add to salads, stir fries, yogurt, muffins or cookies)
- ◆ Legumes (add to casseroles, pastas or soups)
- ◆ Powdered milk (add to meat loaf, cream soups, puddings, custard or milk)
- ◆ Cottage cheese (add to casseroles, egg dishes, pancake or crepe batter)
- ◆ Eggs (add hard cooked eggs to casseroles or salads; add an extra egg to pancake or French toast batter).



Don't forget that exercise is important, even when you are trying to boost your weight. A weight training exercise program can help you increase your muscle mass.