

Eating for Healthy Weight Gain

Cancer and its treatment can make you lose weight. It can lower your appetite and make it hard to get back to your previous weight.

Everyone needs calories from food. Calories give energy needed to stay alive, heal, and do physical work. To gain weight, you need to eat more calories than you use each day.

Tips to Help You Gain Weight

Eat often

- Schedule small meals every 2–3 hours. Aim for six meals and snacks each day.
- Be consistent. Eat at the same times every day.
- Keep a list of all the food you eat each day. This can help you make sure you eat enough.

Choose low-volume, high-calorie foods.

- Eat hearty, dense breads:
 - Oat bran
 - Rye
 - Pumpernickel
 - Whole wheat
- Have nutritious cereals for breakfast or snacks:
 - Cracklin' Oat Bran®
 - Muesli
 - Granola
 - Shredded wheat
 - Grape-Nuts
 - Wheat Chex™
- Pick high-calorie fruits:
 - Apples
 - Dried fruits
 - Bananas
 - Pears
 - Canned fruits in heavy syrup
 - Pineapples
- Include starchy vegetables:
 - Beets
 - Potatoes
 - Corn
 - Sweet potatoes
 - Peas
 - Winter squash
- Use healthy oils and high-fat foods:
 - Avocado
 - Nuts and seeds
 - Canola oil
- Choose hearty soups high in protein:
 - Barley
 - Lentil
 - Black bean
 - Minestrone
 - Chili
 - Split pea

- Use healthy carbohydrates and proteins to add calories to other foods:
 - Beans
 - Honey and jam
 - Dried fruit
 - Wheat germ
 - Whole fat or 2% dried milk powder
 - Soy, rice, or whey protein powder

Try not to eat anything plain.

- Add toppings to all the foods you eat. Try nuts, seeds, dried fruit, or granola in salads, casseroles, or desserts.
- Spread peanut butter or other nut butters on toast or fruit. Choose low-volume, high-calorie foods.
- Put butter, peanut butter, honey, or jelly on toast, pancakes, and bagels.

Make Beverages Count.

- Eat your meals first, then drink your beverages.
- Replace calorie-free beverages like water, coffee, and tea with beverages that have calories:
 - Fruit juices and nectars
 - Homemade milkshakes and smoothies
 - Milk
- When you drink coffee or tea, add whole milk or creamer.

Use supplements to add extra nutrition to your diet.

- Liquids such as Boost®, Ensure®, or Carnation Breakfast Essentials®
- Protein bars
- Calorie enhancers such as Benecalorie®

Talk with your doctor or dietitian to see if these are right for you.

- Olive oil
- Peanut butter