

Tips to Increase Protein and Calories on the Heart Failure Meal Plan

Calories and protein are needed in a healthy diet. Even when you do not feel like eating it is important to eat protein and calories.



- **Eat more calories.** Calories are energy and can help you gain healthy weight and promote healing.
- **Eat more protein.** Protein is important for healing, gives you energy, and helps to build and repair muscle. Protein also helps your body get rid of extra water.

Tips to increase your protein and calories:

- **Read food labels for sodium, protein and calories.** This can help you increase your intake of protein and calories but continue to limit sodium in your diet.
- **Eat 5 to 6 small meals throughout the day and try easy to chew foods.**
- **Keep high-calorie and high-protein snacks on hand.** Natural regular cheese, like Swiss or mozzarella; nut butters; unsalted nuts and high protein bars are a few examples.
- **Add extra calories and protein when cooking.**
 - Cook with unsalted butter, margarine, or oils instead of fat free cooking spray.
 - Use reduced fat (2%) milk instead of fat-free (skim milk).
 - Add milk powder or instant breakfast to protein shakes, cereal or low sodium casseroles.
 - Sprinkle unsalted nuts and seeds into your cereal, stir-fry or salad.
- **Add calories and protein with your fruits and vegetables.**
 - Add peanut butter or other nut butters, yogurt, natural Swiss or mozzarella cheese to fruit.
 - Buy fruit cups canned in syrup instead of water or juice.
 - Add butter or margarine, sour cream or oil to your vegetables.

- **Limit foods that have little or no nutrition value.**
 - Eat fewer calorie free or low-calorie foods like Jell-O[®] and diet soft drinks.
 - When shopping, try to avoid foods that say “low calorie” or “low fat”.
- **Drink high calorie and protein supplements.**
 - Drink protein supplements like Boost Plus[®], Ensure Complete[®], and Carnation Instant Breakfast[®] between meals or as a snack.
 - Count the amount you drink as part of your fluid intake.
 - Try making your own supplement at home with milk, ice cream, flavored syrup and protein powder.
 - Count the amount you drink as part of your fluid intake.
 - Limit the intake of calorie-free drinks such as plain tea, coffee, water and diet soda.

