

Adding Calories to Your Diet

Calories help you to maintain or gain weight. This handout gives ideas on how to add calories to your diet without increasing the amount of food that you eat.

The table below lists examples of foods that are high in calories. Also included is an estimated amount of calories for serving and suggestions for incorporating these foods into your diet. The calorie count of foods varies among brands. It is important to read the nutrition facts label located on the packaged food. This label gives the most accurate information.

Abbreviations: cal = calories; tsp= teaspoon; Tbsp = tablespoon

Food Group	Amount of Calories	Suggestions
Butter or margarine* Note: Use margarine that does not contain hydrogenated oils.	45 cal per 1 tsp	Add to or melt over vegetables, cooked cereals, pasta, rice, soups or casseroles. Spread on breads, rolls, crackers, or a sandwich.
Half-and-half or cream†*	30-50 cal per 1 Tbsp	Use instead of milk when making soups, milkshakes, eggnog mixes, custard or pudding. Use cream to bind ingredients in hamburgers or meatloaf. Mix into mashed potatoes, vegetable purees, soups and casseroles.
Whipped cream†*	30 cal per 1 Tbsp	Use as a tasty topping for fruits, pies, hot chocolate, pudding, gelatin, pancakes and waffles.
Sour cream†*	30 cal per 1 Tbsp	Add to baked potatoes, soups, vegetables, gravies and sauces, salad dressings, stews, gelatin desserts and bread and muffin batter. Also makes a great vegetable dip.
Cream cheese†*	50 cal per 1 Tbsp	Spread on sandwiches, bread, rolls, pastries, crackers and fruit slices. Add to eggs and vegetables when cooking, or roll into balls and coat with chopped nuts, wheat germ or granola.

Food Group	Amount of Calories	Suggestions
		Try a cream cheese spread on lunchmeat and roll it up for a great snack.
Cheese†*	90-115 cal per 1 ounce	Add to baked potatoes, soups, vegetables or casseroles.
Mayonnaise or salad dressing *	100 cal per 1 Tbsp	Use on sandwiches, salads and in dips. Spread or pour over meat or fish.
Oil * Note: Healthy choices are olive and canola oil.	120 cal per 1 Tbsp	Pour over pasta or salad and use in cooking.
Avocado	350 cal per 1 whole	Use on salads, sandwiches or mashed to make guacamole.
Hummus	25 cal per 1 Tbsp	Add to sandwiches or eat with vegetables.
Gravy and sauces *	20-40 cal per 1 Tbsp	Pour over vegetables, meats, eggs, rice, noodles, beans, breads and casseroles.
Dried fruits	150-200 cal per ½ cup	Combine with nuts or granola and serve as a snack, or cook and serve as a dessert. Add to muffins, cookies, breads, cakes, cereals, stuffing and rice and grain dishes. For a different flavor, mix into meat dishes and cooked vegetables, such as carrots, sweet potatoes, yams, acorn squash and butternut squash. Sprinkle over salads or desserts, such as ice cream, frozen yogurt and pudding.
Honey	60 cal per 1 Tbsp	Add to cereals, milk drinks, yogurt, smoothies, milkshakes and fruit desserts. Serve as a glaze for meats, such as chicken or ham. Pour on cornbread, breads, rolls or muffins.
Granola	300 cal per ½ cup	May be substituted for, or added to, bread or rice in pudding recipes. Sprinkle on vegetables, yogurt, ice cream, pudding, custard and fruits. Add to cookie, muffin and bread batters.
Nuts	200 cal per ¼ cup	Can be ground, chopped, or added whole to ice cream, muffins, milkshakes, yogurt, puddings, breads, pancakes, waffles, cookies, meatloaf, hamburger dishes, vegetable dishes and salads. When chopped, they can coat bananas, cream cheese balls or ice cream bars.

Peanut butter, almond butter or cashew butter*	95 cal per 1 Tbsp	Can be spread on crackers, bread, rolls, fruit, and cake, added to milkshakes or topped on ice cream. Try mixed with honey or swirled in yogurt.
Jams and jellies	60 cal per 1 Tbsp	Can be spread on bread, rolls, crackers and pastries. Use them as a topping on ice cream, yogurt and frozen yogurt. Mix them into smoothies and milkshakes.

† These products may contain lactose. If you are lactose intolerant or are allergic to lactose, choose lactose-free products if available. Some examples are Lactaid[®] milk, soy milk, lactose-free cheeses, sour creams, cream cheeses, etc. If you are unable to find these products, use Lactaid[®] pills or drops that can be purchased in a local drug store.

* May be a significant source of saturated fat. It is recommended that less than 10% of calories per day come from saturated fats.

Pack Snacks!

When you know you will be away from home for a few hours, make sure to take high-calorie snacks with you. These are a few quick and easy ideas.

- Trail mix made with nuts, seeds and dried fruit
- Individually wrapped cheese sticks
- Fruit and fruit juices
- Peanut butter or cheese crackers
- Whole-milk yogurt or yogurt drinks
- Granola bar or energy bar
- Individual servings of cottage cheese or pudding
- Nutrition supplements such as Ensure[®] or Boost[®]

If you have any questions about your diet, talk with your registered dietitian at the Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center.

References

Nutrition Care Manual from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 2014.

US Department of Agriculture. Agricultural Research Service, USDA National Nutrient Database for Standard Reference, 2013.

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