

High-Calorie Sample Menus

Cancer and its treatment can cause your body to use energy very quickly. When your body uses large amounts of energy, you may lose weight or have difficulty gaining weight. Your oncologist or registered dietitian may suggest that you follow a high-calorie diet to help keep you at a healthy weight.

If you are struggling with eating enough calories due to the side effects of your cancer or treatment, the following tips can help you increase your calorie intake:

- Try consuming several small meals throughout the day, spaced 2-3 hours apart.
- Eat more when your appetite is best.
- Use condiments to add calories to your food, such as adding extra butter, sour cream, oils, cheese, whole milk, whipped cream, mayonnaise, salad dressing, jelly, jam, syrup, and honey.
- Avoid drinking beverages with meals. These take up room in your stomach, making you feel full faster. Save them for in-between meals.
- Avoid foods labelled “lite” or “diet”.

The sample menu below provides 3,000 calories a day. Check with your healthcare team or registered dietitian to see how many calories you need in a day.

High-Calorie Sample Menu: Day 1

MEAL	SUGGESTED ITEMS	NOTES
BREAKFAST Calories 750	1 large scrambled egg 1 medium biscuit 2 Tbsp. butter 2 Tbsp. jelly 1 cup grape juice 1 cup 2% or whole milk	Biscuits, butter, whole milk, and juice are high in calories.
MORNING SNACK Calories 253	1 cup celery stalks 2 Tbsp. peanut butter 2 Tbsp. raisins	For variety, try almond, hazelnut or soy nut butters. Dried fruits are high in calories.
LUNCH Calories 788	grilled chicken sandwich with 4 oz. chicken 1 leaf lettuce 1 slice tomato 1 oz. cheese 1 Tbsp. mayonnaise 1 cup applesauce 1 oz. pretzels	Double the cheese or mayonnaise for even more calories at lunch.
AFTERNOON SNACK Calories 294	<i>Orange Pineapple Smoothie*</i>	
DINNER Calories 779	1 cup spaghetti with 3/4 cup tomato sauce and 3 oz. cooked ground beef 1 medium breadstick 1 Tbsp. butter	Large serving of spaghetti noodles and butter help to increase calories
BEDTIME SNACK Calories 144	½ cup chocolate ice cream	Use sorbet without fruits.

*Denotes recipe on LLSnutrition.org

High-Calorie Sample Menu: Day 2

MEAL	SUGGESTED ITEMS	NOTES
BREAKFAST Calories 721	1 cup Cheerios with 1 cup 2% or whole milk and ½ cup dried blueberries 1 English muffin with 2 Tbsp. peanut butter	Dried fruits and nuts are calorie boosters.
MORNING SNACK Calories 279	6 oz. fruit yogurt 6 vanilla wafers	Use regular yogurt and skip the light or low-fat yogurt.
LUNCH Calories 702	1.5 cups <i>Turkey Pot Pie with Cornbread Crust*</i> 1 cup green beans with 1 Tbsp. butter and 1 oz. almonds 1 cup cranberry juice	Large servings of casseroles and combination dishes like pot pies help to add calories. Add a handful of nuts or dried fruits as dessert.
AFTERNOON SNACK Calories 360	High-calorie liquid nutrition supplement	Look for the words “plus” or “high-calorie” on the liquid nutrition drinks.
DINNER Calories 782	3 oz. pork loin ¾ cup glazed carrots ¾ cup mashed potatoes made with milk and butter 1 medium dinner roll with 2 Tbsp. butter	Stir in extra butter, whole milk, cheese, and sour cream to increase calories in mashed potatoes.
BEDTIME SNACK Calories 164	1 serving <i>Pear Crisp*</i>	Baked desserts can add calories even in small servings.

High-Calorie Sample Menu: Day 3

MEAL	SUGGESTED ITEMS	NOTES
BREAKFAST Calories 750	2 medium waffles with 1 Tbsp. butter and 1/4 cup maple syrup 1/2 cup vanilla yogurt 1 cup grapes	Large servings of butter, syrup, and waffles help to add calories.
MORNING SNACK Calories 240	4 squares graham crackers 1 cup 2% milk	Swap the 2% milk with whole milk or a milkshake to add calories.
LUNCH Calories 780	<u><i>Curried Chicken Salad Sandwich*</i></u> with 2 slices white bread 1 cup carrot sticks with 2 Tbsp. ranch dressing 1 cup canned pears	Extra salad dressing and fruit servings help to increase calories.
AFTERNOON SNACK Calories 240	6 cheese crackers	
DINNER Calories 757	4 oz baked salmon 3/4 cup rice with 1 Tbsp. butter 3/4 cup steamed broccoli with 1 oz. melted cheese 1 medium dinner roll with 1 Tbsp. butter	Sprinkle cheese and butter on rice and broccoli to boost calories.
BEDTIME SNACK Calories 272	3 medium gingersnap cookies 1 cup 2% or whole milk	

Orange Pineapple Smoothie

Fruit smoothies are a great way to add some extra fruit and antioxidants in your diet. Smoothies are also great options if you are experiencing side effects such as difficulty swallowing or mouth sores.

You may want to add extra protein by using protein powder or dry milk powder.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 banana
- 2 cups pineapple chunks packed in juice and drained
- 1 cup orange juice
- 1/4 cup nonfat milk
- 2 Tbsp. honey
- 4-5 ice cubes

DIRECTIONS

Place all ingredients in blender and puree until smooth.

Makes 2 servings. Per serving: 292 calories, 0 g. total fat (0 g. saturated fat), 73 g. carbohydrates, 4 g. protein, 4 g. dietary fiber, 20 mg. sodium

Recipe from the [American Institute for Cancer Research](#)



Turkey Pot Pie with Cornbread Crust

Turkey pot pie with cornbread crust is the ultimate comfort food, and this recipe is a healthy version with less than 300 calories per serving! Tip: If you are short on time, try using frozen vegetables instead of fresh. It's often easier to keep frozen veggies on hand.

INGREDIENTS

Pie Filling:

- 1/2 cup sliced carrots, in 1/2-inch slices
- 1/2 cup sliced celery, in 1/2-inch slices
- 1 cup frozen pearl onions
- 2 cups fat-free, reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1 Tbsp. extra virgin olive oil
- 1 1/2 Tbsp. rice flour
- 1 cup low-fat (1 percent) milk, at room temperature
- 1 tsp. dried thyme
- 2 cups cooked diced turkey breast, in 3/4-inch pieces
- 1 cup green peas, fresh or frozen
- Salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

In medium saucepan, simmer carrots, celery and onions in chicken broth until they are tender-crisp, about 5 minutes. With slotted spoon, remove vegetables and set aside. Boil broth until it is reduced to 1 1/4 cups, about 5 minutes. Set broth aside.

In heavy saucepan, heat oil over medium heat. Mix in rice flour and whisk constantly for 1 minute as it bubbles. Do not let it color. Slowly add 1/2 cup of reduced broth and whisk until combined with flour mixture. Gradually add remaining broth while whisking vigorously. Add milk and cook sauce for 5 minutes, whisking often, until it has consistency of light creamed soup. Mix in thyme, turkey, green peas and reserved vegetables. Season filling to taste with salt and pepper. Spread filling in 8-inch square baking dish and set aside.

For topping, in microwavable bowl, melt butter. Add milk and egg and mix with fork to beat egg. Stir in cornbread mix. Spoon topping over pot pie filling in baking dish, dropping it in dollops to leave room around edges of pan and between dollops.

Bake pot pie for 30-35 minutes, or until topping feels firm to touch, is lightly browned, and filling is bubbling. Let sit for 15 minutes before serving.

Per 1 1/2 cup serving: 270 calories, 7 g fat (2.5 g sat fat), 34 g carbohydrates, 19 g protein, 3 g fiber, 460 mg sodium.

Recipe from the [American Institute for Cancer Research](#)



Topping:

- 5 tsp. unsalted butter
- 3/4 cup low-fat (1 percent) milk
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 package (10 oz.) gluten-free cornbread mix

Pear Crisp

If you are looking for a warm, comforting dessert, this delicious pear crisp is a great option. Pears are great sources of fiber, vitamin C, and even provide some potassium, which make them a great addition to your diet. You can always substitute or add additional fruits to this crisp as well. This recipe also offers whole grains and added fiber from the oats and omega-3 fatty acids from the walnuts.



INGREDIENTS

- 1/4 cup rolled oats
- 1 Tbsp. walnuts
- 3 Tbsp. all-purpose flour
- 3 Tbsp. whole wheat flour
- 2 1/2 Tbsp. packed light brown sugar
- 1/8 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 Tbsp. plus 2 tsp. canola oil
- 6 firm, yet ripe pears, peeled (if desired), cored and cubed
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 1 Tbsp. lemon juice
- 2 Tbsp. sugar
- 2 Tbsp. flour
- 1/8 tsp. nutmeg
- Pinch of cloves

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Lightly spray 8- or 9- inch round cake pan.

In food processor, pulse oats and walnuts 15 seconds. Add flour, brown sugar and cinnamon. Blend 15 more seconds. While running, drizzle oil and blend 30 seconds. Transfer to bowl and set aside.

In another bowl, toss pears with next 6 ingredients. Spoon pears into prepared cake pan. Cover with oat mixture, pressing down gently. Bake 45-50 minutes, until topping is brown and pears are bubbling. Serve hot, topped with nonfat frozen yogurt or low-fat ice cream, if desired.

Makes 9 servings.

Per serving: 164 calories, 4 g. total fat (<1 g. saturated fat), 34 g. carbohydrates, 2 g. protein, 4 g. dietary fiber, 3 mg. sodium.

Recipe from the [American Institute for Cancer Research](#)



Curried Chicken Salad

Make this recipe ahead of time for a quick, healthy, delicious lunch! This dish is a great source of protein and vitamin C. The mandarin oranges and raisins add just the right amount of sweetness to this version of curried chicken salad.

This recipe is brought to you from the American Cancer Society cookbook *Celebrate! Healthy Entertaining for Any Occasion*.



INGREDIENTS

- 1 small onion, sliced thinly
- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves
- 2 teaspoons curry powder, divided
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic salt
- 1/4 cup orange juice
- 1 15-ounce can mandarin oranges, drained well
- 4 scallions, chopped finely
- 1 cup golden raisins
- 2 tablespoons sweetened, flaked coconut, divided
- 1/4 cup light mayonnaise
- 24 whole-wheat crackers or your choice of bread

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400°F.

Scatter onion slices on the bottom of a medium baking dish. Place chicken in baking dish and sprinkle with curry and garlic salt. Pour orange juice around chicken.

Bake for 15 minutes or until cooked through. Cool, then cut into bite-sized pieces.

In a medium bowl, mix chicken, oranges, scallions, raisins, and 1 tablespoon of coconut. Stir in mayonnaise.

Transfer to serving bowl and top with remaining coconut. Serve with whole-wheat crackers, pita bread, whole wheat bread, or on top of salad greens!

Approximate per serving: 300 calories; 7 grams of fat.