

Ways to Increase Protein

Protein is essential for a wide range of functions, including building and repairing cells and maintaining muscle mass. You can typically meet your protein needs by including a good source of protein with each meal and with snacks. Your oncology dietitian can help determine if your protein needs may be higher depending on your diagnosis and treatment plan.

Protein Sources	Ideas for Use
Hard or semi-soft cheese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Melt on sandwiches, bread, muffins, tortillas, hamburgers, meats or fish, vegetables, eggs, desserts, stewed fruit, or pies. ■ Grate and add to soups, sauces, casseroles, vegetable dishes, mashed potatoes, rice, noodles, or meatloaf. ■ Nibble on a chunk of cheese or cheese stick with crackers and fruit. ■ Choose low-fat varieties if you are watching calories.
Cottage or ricotta cheese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Mix with or use to stuff fruits and vegetables. ■ Add to casseroles, spaghetti, noodles, and egg dishes, such as omelets and scrambled eggs. ■ Use in gelatin, puddings, cheesecake, and pancake batter. ■ Use to stuff crêpes and pasta shells or manicotti.
Milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use milk instead of water in drinks and in cooking. ■ Use to prepare hot cereals, soups, cocoa, and pudding. ■ Add cream sauces to vegetables and other dishes.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low- and nonfat dairy products are preferred unless you are trying to prevent weight loss.
Nonfat instant dry milk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add to regular milk and milk drinks, such as pasteurized eggnog and milkshakes. Use in casseroles, meatloaf, breads, muffins, sauces, cream soups, mashed potatoes, macaroni and cheese, pudding, custard, and milk-based desserts.
Meal replacement drinks, supplements, and protein powder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use “instant breakfast” powder in milk drinks and desserts. Mix commercial supplements (e.g. Ensure or Boost) with milk and fruit for a high-protein drink. Add ice cream to boost calories. Add a scoop of vanilla- or chocolate-flavored whey protein powder to milk, shakes, and smoothies. Unflavored and chicken broth-flavored whey powders are also available. A high-protein bar makes an easy, portable snack.
Ice cream, yogurt, and frozen yogurt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make a milkshake or smoothie. Blend with milk and fruit, such as berries, bananas, or soft fruits. Add to carbonated beverages, such as ginger ale or root beer. Add to cereal, soft or cooked fruit, gelatin desserts, and pies. Sandwich ice cream or frozen yogurt between cookies or graham crackers.
Eggs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Add chopped, hard-boiled eggs to salads, vegetables, and casseroles. Try a quiche as a main dish. Add extra eggs or egg whites to pancake and French toast batter. Add extra egg whites to scrambled eggs and omelets.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Make a rich custard with eggs and high-protein milk. ■ Add extra hard-boiled yolks to deviled egg filling and sandwich spreads. ■ Avoid raw or undercooked eggs that may contain harmful bacteria, as your treatment can make you more susceptible to food-borne illnesses.
Nuts, seeds, and wheat germ	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Add to casseroles, breads, muffins, pancakes, cookies, and waffles. ■ Sprinkle on fruit, cereal, ice cream, yogurt, vegetables, salads, and toast. ■ Keep nuts at your desk or carry them with you for snacks. ■ Roll a banana in chopped nuts. ■ Use in place of bread crumbs. ■ Blend with parsley or spinach, herbs, and cream for a noodle, pasta, or vegetable sauce. ■ Quinoa is a high-protein grain. Try it as a side dish in place of rice. It can also be used as a base for salads and can be added to soups and stews.
Peanut butter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Spread on sandwiches, toast, muffins, crackers, waffles, pancakes, and fruit slices. ■ Use as a dip for raw vegetables, such as carrots and celery. ■ Blend with milkshakes and other beverages. ■ Swirl through soft ice cream and yogurt. ■ PB2 is a powdered peanut product high in protein.
Meat, poultry, and fish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Add chopped, cooked meat or fish to vegetables, salads, casseroles, soups, sauces, and biscuit dough. ■ Use in omelets, soufflés, quiches, and sandwich fillings.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Wrap in pie crust or biscuit dough as turnovers. ■ Add to stuffed baked potatoes.
Beans/legumes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Add peas, lentils, beans, edamame, and tofu to soups and salads, casseroles, and pasta and grain dishes. ■ Hummus makes a great dip with carrot sticks or pita chips. Use as a spread on wraps. ■ Mash cooked beans with cheese and milk.