

# Eating Strategies to Gain Weight

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It costs 3500 calories to gain one pound. That means, in order to gain one pound a week, you have to consume 500 extra calories every day. Here are some tips for getting those extra calories into your daily meal plan.

- **Eat frequently!** -- Make time for 3 large meals and 2-3 hefty snacks every day.
- **Eat larger** than normal portions at meals!
- **Eat higher calorie foods!** -- Choose dried fruit, starchy vegetables, dense whole grain breads and cereals, hearty bean soups, nuts...
- **Add lots of “extras” to food!** -- Don't eat anything plain.
  - Add healthy unsaturated fats: olive and canola oil, nuts, seeds, peanut butter, avocados.
  - Add healthy carbs and protein: honey, jam, dried fruit, wheat germ, nonfat dried milk powder, soy protein powder.
- **Make beverages count!** -- Drink shakes, milk, juice, etc. instead of water, coffee, tea, and diet sodas.
- **Do resistance exercises!** -- Weight training helps convert the extra calories into muscle rather than flab. Aim for 2-3 times per week.

## TRY THESE QUICK-N-EASY BREAKFAST IDEAS:

- ⇒ Whip together 2 cups fruit juice, 1 cup fresh, frozen or canned fruit, 1 cup yogurt, 1/4 cup dried nonfat milk powder, and 1/4 cup wheat germ or oat bran for a high energy liquid meal to go.
- ⇒ Spread peanut butter, honey, or jam on large bagels, muffins, hearty whole wheat bread/toast, graham crackers or stoned wheat crackers. Grab an extra large banana and wash it down with a tall glass of milk
- ⇒ Fill a plastic bag with raisins and nuts (trail mix) or your favorite dry cereal. Grab an 8 oz container of fruit yogurt and a couple cans/boxes of fruit juice.
- ⇒ Nontraditional ideas:
  - \* Heat up leftover pizza, pasta, or Chinese food from last night's dinner.
  - \* Make a peanut butter and honey, grilled cheese, tuna, or turkey sandwich.
  - \* Pop a baked potato in the microwave for 5-10 minutes; top with chopped veggies (frozen ones are quickest) and melted cheese, canned chili, or hearty bean soup.
  - \* Wrap vegetarian refried beans, shredded low fat cheddar cheese, and tomato salsa in a couple of flour tortillas.

## TRY THESE QUICK-N-EASY SNACK IDEAS:

- ⇒ **Dry cereal:** Wheat Chex, Shredded Wheat, Cheerios, Oat Squares, granola. NOTE: Add raisins or other dried fruits to boost the calories and carbs.
- ⇒ **Pretzels:** Naturally fat free. Look for reduced salt or salt-free varieties if you are watching your salt intake.
- ⇒ **Crackers:** Stoned wheat, sesame, bran, RyKrisp, or other low fat or fat free brands NOTE: Spread with peanut butter or add slices of cheese to boost the calories and protein.
- ⇒ **Bagels:** The bigger the better. Look for whole wheat, pumpernickel, rye, or ones with seeds to get the most nutrients. NOTE: Spread with peanut butter, honey, jam, or low fat cream cheese to boost the calories.
- ⇒ **Fruits:** Bananas, apples, oranges, grapes, or other fresh fruits. NOTE: Dried fruits (like raisins, apricots, and dates) are especially easy to pack and very calorie dense.
- ⇒ **Nuts and seeds:** Peanuts, pistachios, almonds, sunflower seeds and other nuts/seeds are high in calories and good sources of protein, healthy monounsaturated fats, vitamin E, and several other vitamins and minerals.
- ⇒ **Sports bars, breakfast bars, and low fat granola bars:** Prewrapped, very portable, and very tasty.

# Foods to Choose When You Need More Calories

- **Breads**

Choose hearty, dense breads such as whole wheat, oat bran, pumpernickel, or rye (as opposed to fluffy white breads). The bigger and more thickly sliced the better! Spread generously with peanut butter, jam, honey, hummus, or low fat cream cheese.

- **Cereals**

Choose dense cold cereals such as granola, muesli, Grape-Nuts, Cracklin Oat Bran, Shredded Wheat n Bran or Wheat Chex (instead of flaked or puffed cereals). When making oatmeal and other hot cereals, use low fat milk instead of water. Add extra nuts and dried fruits for flavor.

- **Vegetables**

Starchy vegetables such as potatoes, peas, corn, carrots, winter squash, and beets have more calories than watery veggies like broccoli, cauliflower, zucchini, green beans, and cucumbers.

- **Fruits**

Bananas, pears, apples, pineapple, and all dried fruits (raisins, dates, dried apricots, etc.) have more calories than watery fruits such as oranges, peaches, plums, berries, and watermelon. Buy canned fruit packed in heavy syrup, instead of its own juice, for extra calories.

- **Soups**

Select hearty black bean, lentil, split pea, chili with beans, barley, or minestrone soups. These soups have more calories and carbohydrates than brothy chicken, beef, and vegetable types.

NOTE: Creamed soups and chowders are also high-calorie choices, but they are very high in saturated fat and should be eaten in moderation.

- **Salads**

Rather than filling up on watery lettuce, pile on the garbanzo and kidney beans, green peas and corn, chopped vegetables, sunflower seeds and chopped walnuts, raisins, cottage cheese, lean meats, tuna fish, and croutons. Top with a liberal amount of vinegar and oil type dressing.

NOTE: Creamy dressings are high in calories, but also high in saturated fat.

- **Beverages**

Quench your thirst with fruit juices and nectars, low fat milk, shakes, fruit smoothies, and regular soft drinks. Avoid filling your stomach up with non caloric beverages like water, coffee, tea, and diet soft drinks.

## HEALTHY HIGH-FAT ADDITIONS

| Try...   | Instead of...   |
|--|---|
| <p><u>canola or olive oil</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• use to stir fry vegetables, chicken, and lean meats</li> <li>• add to pasta, tomato sauce, and salads</li> </ul>                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• butter</li> <li>• creamy sauces and creamy salad dressings</li> <li>• butter, cream cheese</li> <li>• instead of gravy, sour cream, and butter</li> <li>• regular cheeses</li> <li>• regular cream cheese</li> <li>• mayonnaise, sour cream</li> </ul> |
| <p><u>nuts and seeds</u> *</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• add to hot or cold cereals, stir fry dishes, vegetables, casseroles, salads</li> </ul>   |   |
| <p><u>natural peanut butter</u> *</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• spread on bread, bagels, crackers</li> </ul>  |   |
| <p><u>trans-free tub margarine</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• add to potatoes and other vegetables, hot cereals, soups, breads, rice</li> </ul>  |   |
| <p><u>low fat and fat free cheeses</u> *</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• sprinkle on casseroles, soups, and salads</li> <li>• melt on vegetables</li> <li>• serve on sandwiches and crackers</li> </ul> |   |
| <p><u>low fat and fat free cream cheeses</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• spread on bagels and crackers</li> <li>• serve with fruit</li> </ul>   |   |
| <p><u>avocado</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• add to sandwiches, salads, and Mexican dishes</li> </ul>  |   |

## HEALTHY HIGH-CARBOHYDRATE AND PROTEIN ADDITIONS

- Add Carnation Instant Breakfast, Nestle's Quick, Ovaltine, or malt powder to flavor low fat milk.
- Add dried fruit, sugar, or maple syrup to sweeten hot or cold cereals.
- Spread honey, jam, or jelly on breads, bagels, and crackers.
- Add wheat germ or oat bran to casseroles, hot cereal, or power shakes.
- Mix nonfat dry milk powder or soy protein powder into shakes, casseroles, mashed potatoes, soups, and hot cereal.

\* Also a good source of protein.

# Sample Weight Gain Menus

The key to gaining weight is to consistently...  
eat larger than normal portions,  
choose healthful, high calorie foods and beverages,  
and make time for three meals plus one or more hefty snacks every day!

These sample menus suggest healthful, high calorie, carbohydrate rich sports meals and snacks.

## Eating at Home:

### Approximate Calories

#### Breakfast

|                        |             |
|------------------------|-------------|
| 1 ½ cups orange juice  | 165         |
| 1 cup granola          | 500         |
| ¼ cup raisins          | 120         |
| 1 large banana         | 130         |
| 2 cups 1% low fat milk | 200         |
| <b>Total</b>           | <b>1115</b> |

#### Lunch

|                            |             |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| 1 7-inch pita pocket       | 240         |
| 1 6.5 oz can tuna          | 200         |
| 4 Tbs. lite mayo           | 150         |
| 1 tomato + lettuce/sprouts | 50          |
| 1 can lentil soup          | 360         |
| 1 ½ cups apple juice       | 200         |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>1200</b> |

#### Dinner

|                                  |             |
|----------------------------------|-------------|
| 3 cups spaghetti                 | 600         |
| 1 cup Prego pasta sauce          | 300         |
| 1 10 oz pkg. frozen spinach      | 75          |
| or 1 ½ cups frozen mixed veggies |             |
| ¼ cup parmesan cheese            | 120         |
| 1 slice hearty wheat bread       | 100         |
| 1 ½ cup 1% low fat milk          | 150         |
| <b>Total</b>                     | <b>1345</b> |

#### Snack

|                             |            |
|-----------------------------|------------|
| 2 slices hearty wheat bread | 200        |
| 2 Tbs. peanut butter        | 200        |
| 3 Tbs. jelly                | 150        |
| 2 cups 1% low-fat milk      | 200        |
| 2 medium carrots            | 60         |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>810</b> |

**Day's Total: 4470 calories**

## Eating on the Run:

### Approximate Calories

#### Breakfast (at Bagel Shop)

|                            |             |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| 2 large bagels             | 600         |
| 3 oz lite cream cheese     | 260         |
| 1 cup low fat fruit yogurt | 250         |
| 12 oz orange juice         | 165         |
| <b>Total</b>               | <b>1275</b> |

#### Lunch (at McDonald's)

|                               |             |
|-------------------------------|-------------|
| 1 Grilled Chicken Delux       | 330         |
| 1 sm french fries             | 210         |
| 16 oz low fat chocolate shake | 340         |
| 1 large (32 oz) Sprite        | 310         |
| 1 large banana                | 130         |
| <b>Total</b>                  | <b>1320</b> |

#### Dinner (at Pizza Place)

|  |             |
|--|-------------|
| 1 medium (10-inch), thick crust cheese + veggie pizza  | 1200        |
| Salad Bar (1 cup lettuce + ½ cup each green pepper, broccoli, carrots, tomato, and garbanzo beans) | 255         |
| 2 Tbs. Italian salad dressing  | 100         |
| Water  | 0           |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>1555</b> |

#### Snack (Cafeteria)

|                              |            |
|------------------------------|------------|
| 2 slices hearty wheat bread  | 200        |
| 3 oz turkey breast           | 165        |
| 1 tomato + lettuce/sprouts   | 50         |
| 1 large apple                | 100        |
| 1 cup (8 oz) 2% low fat milk | 120        |
| <b>Total</b>                 | <b>635</b> |

**Day's Total: 4785 calories**