

Your guide to bringing in food and beverages

Being in the hospital can be a stressful time. Patients may often eat less than usual or not get enough calories and protein for reasons such as:

- an increased need for calories and protein to promote healing and recovery
- a decreased appetite
- having difficulty swallowing
- changes in taste
- confusion

If your family member or friend is having difficulty getting enough calories and protein while in the hospital, it can result in poor healing, weight loss and slower recovery.

We encourage bringing in foods from home to help your family member or friend to eat more at their meals and snacks.

This handout gives ideas on types of foods to bring to the hospital that are good sources of calories and protein. These foods will help promote healing and recovery.

General suggestions

- Try encouraging your family member or friend to have a small meal or snack every 2 to 3 hours throughout the day, instead of 3 large meals.
- Include a protein food with each meal and snack. Some examples could be cheese and apple slices, peanut butter and banana, or Greek yogurt and berries.
- Bring in favourite foods from home or restaurants.
- Avoid filling up on low-calorie drinks like tea and coffee. Have a glass of milk or nutritional supplements like Ensure™ or Boost™ instead.

Tips to increase protein and calorie intake

- Add whole milk (3.25% M.F. or milk fat) or whipping cream to hot or cold cereal, coffee, or tea.
- Try Greek yogurt for added protein. Add it to smoothies and milk shakes. Look for at least 5% M.F.
- Enjoy ice cream as a snack or dessert. Make it into a milkshake with protein powder or a nutritional supplement.
- Enjoy cheese as a snack or with meals.
- Enjoy eggs on salads and sandwiches and at meals.
- Enjoy nuts and nut butters (such as peanut, almond or cashew butter) as a snack or with meals.
- Add protein powder or skim milk powder to milk, pudding, hot chocolate, milkshakes or smoothies.
- Drink eggnog, whole milk or nutritional supplements such as:
 - Ensure™
 - Boost™
 - PC Nutri-Total™, or
 - Carnation Breakfast Essentials™

Try adding these to milkshakes or coffee.



Instead of	Try this
Low fat yogurt, with 0% M.F.	Greek yogurt with at least 2% M.F. or cottage cheese
Coffee	Latte or ice coffee made with whole milk
Regular granola bars	Protein bars with greater than 9 grams of protein in each bar
Fruit by itself	Fruit with added protein such as banana with peanut butter



Please let the patient's nurse, charge nurse, dietitian, or dietetic assistant know about any food you bring in.

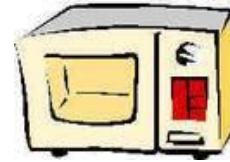
Patients may be unable to eat and drink because of surgeries or medical tests, or may need a special diet with a modified texture.

Food safety

Food safety is a concern when bringing in foods from outside sources.

Here are some tips:

- When you arrive at the hospital, place foods in the refrigerator that are not going to be eaten right away.
- Bring in “single-servings” of foods.
- Wrap or put foods in disposable containers that are safe to put into the microwave.
- Re-heat foods in the microwave to a safe temperature.
- Do not bring in any high risk foods, including raw meat or fish, deli meats, foods that have passed their expiry date, or unpasteurized honey or dairy products (such as soft cheese).
- Do not leave foods at room temperature for long periods of time.



When a food makes you sick, it is called a foodborne illness or food poisoning.

Talk to your dietitian for more information about safely preparing and bringing in food or ask for a copy of the HHS patient education handout, “Food Safety”.

Food allergies

Check the dietitian or dietetic assistant to see if the patient has any food allergies or intolerances before bringing in any food or beverages.

Food with modified textures

Some patients need to have special diets with modified textures such as puree or minced foods, or thickened fluids to make food safer.

If your family member is on a special diet, check with the dietitian, dietetic assistant, or speech language pathologist to see which foods your family member or friend can safely eat with their diet texture.

Frequently asked questions



Can I heat up food?

Yes. Staff can heat up food for you using the microwave, toaster and/or kettle in the pantry. You **cannot** bring in a hot plate or use a kettle in the patient's room.

Where can we store food once we bring it into the hospital?

If there is a pantry on the unit, you can store your family member/friend's food in the fridge located in the pantry. If the pantry is locked, you will have to ask staff to place the food in the fridge for you.

Please label all food items with the patient's name, date prepared, and the food item, using labels from the nursing station.

My family member or friend has diabetes, what should I bring?

Ask for options from the dietitian, dietetic assistant or the nurse to help increase your family member's calories. It is important to let the nurse know when the patient is eating food brought in from home.

List of high protein foods

Product name/description	Serving size	Calories	Protein (g)
Yogurts/Smoothie drinks			
iÖGO drinkable yogurt	200 ml	130	5
iÖGO protein drinkable yogurt	100 g	160	10
Milk2Go Sport	325 ml	200	26
Premier protein shake	325 ml	160	30
Tim Horton's Greek yogurt parfait	198 g	270	15
Single-serve items			
Beef jerky	1 piece (20 g)	82	7
Hard-boiled egg	1 large (50 g)	78	6
Cheese string	1 string	60	6
Mini Babybel Cheese	21 g	70	5
Clover Leaf Tuna Snacks Classic	90 g	160	14
Great Value Traditional Trail Mix	3 tablespoons	140	4
SummerFresh Hummus Snack 'n Go	57 g	120	4
Starbucks Protein Bistro Box	193 g	370	13
Snack foods			
SimplyProtein Chips	33 g bag	140	15
SimplyProtein Crunch	33 g bag	100	10
Nature Valley Protein Granola	½ cup	220	11
Edge Protein Cereal	1 cup	220	11
Harvest Snaps	28 g	110	5
Beanitos White Bean Chips	28 g	140	5
Roasted chickpeas	¼ cup	140	5
Protein bars			
Simply Protein Whey Bar	40 g bar	150	15
CLIF Builder's Bar	68 g bar	270	20
Pure Protein Bar	50 g bar	180	21
Nature Valley Protein Bar	40 g bar	190	10
Vector Energy Bar	55 g bar	230	9

All brand names listed in the above chart have registered trademarks.

