

Nutrition Tips For ALS: Increasing Calories on a Soft Diet

A guide provided to help you increase the nutrient density of your soft foods and liquids.



Getting the right nutrition can be a challenge for ALS patients. You may have chewing or swallowing difficulties that make it hard to eat enough calories and protein each day to maintain a healthy body weight. While ALS is a progressive disease, eating a well-balanced diet with proper nutrition can improve your strength and well-being.



Aim to maintain your usual weight. Do not try to lose weight by dieting. Adequate nutrition is necessary to maintain a healthy weight and the highest possible level of function and endurance. It also helps to protect you from infection and illness.

As ALS progresses, eating may become more difficult or appetite may decrease. You may find it easier to eat softer foods and liquids to meet your nutrition needs.

Use this handout for ideas! Ask your dietitian for advice and support!

Basic Principles:

1. Eat small frequent meals (6-8 times per day!) It may be easier to eat smaller quantities more often throughout the day. Try to eat every 2-3 hours during the day.
2. Make every bite and sip count by eating calorie dense foods or adding calories to your favorite foods.
3. Limit foods and beverages that are *low* in calories such as diet sodas and plain coffee or tea.
4. Eat a variety of foods- include a variety of colors, textures and flavors with all food groups.
5. Always carry high calorie snacks with you while waiting for appointments, in the car, or waiting in lines.

Tips to Increase Calories:

You need to eat enough calories to maintain your weight and to prevent your body from breaking down its own muscle. Foods high in fat and sugar are good sources of calories.

To boost calories, try these tips with favorite foods:

- Add butter, cream, half-and-half, and gravy.
- Add vegetable oils, mayonnaise and avocado to vegetables or salads.
- Add honey, sugar, jellies/jams, molasses, and maple syrup to foods.
- Use full-fat dairy products- whole milk, cottage cheese, yogurts and ice cream.
- Try cream cheese or peanut butter on crackers, bagels, fruit, or carrot sticks.
- Create a smoothie using an Instant breakfast drink mix or nutrition supplement.
- Add coconut cream to shakes or main dishes for extra calories and a tropical taste.



Your goals: **Calories** _____ **/day**

Additives: These food items can increase your overall calorie intake!

Food	Calories	Food	Calories
Butter/Margarine-1 Tbsp	100	Maple Syrup 2 Tbsp	100
Mayonnaise 1 Tbsp	100	Honey 1 Tbsp	64
Cooking Oil 1 Tbsp	120	Sugar 1 Tbsp	45
Heavy Cream-1 Tbsp	52	Peanut Butter 1 Tbsp	100
Half and Half-8 oz	350	Chocolate Syrup 2 Tbsp	100
Sour Cream 2 Tbsp	45	Cheese 1 oz	~100

Common Foods: Calorie and protein content to give you ideas for meal planning!

Foods	Calories	Protein
1 cup canned vegetables- non-starchy- carrots	50	4
½ cup cooked cereal	80	3
1 slice bread	80-100	3
1 cup milk (8 oz)	150	8
1 cup starchy canned vegetable- corn	160	6
3 oz baked fish	105-165	21
1 cup pasta cooked	160	6
2 scrambled eggs	180	14
1 cup Cream of Broccoli Soup	~200	varies
1 cup New England Clam Chowder	~200	varies
3 oz ground chicken, turkey, pork, lamb	225	21
1 cup cooked rice	240	9
Boost/Ensure Regular	250	8
Carnation Instant Breakfast with 8 oz whole milk	280	12
MacDonald's small chocolate shake	320	12
Chick-Fil-A small frosted lemonade	320	6
Wendy's small chocolate frosty	330	8
Boost /Ensure Plus	360	15

Try These Meal and Snack Ideas:

- Yogurt (whole milk) or Cottage Cheese with added fruit
- Fresh/canned fruit in syrup with added sugar and whipped cream
- Hard boiled/deviled egg with extra yolk and mayonnaise
- Oatmeal with whole milk, brown sugar, butter/margarine
- Scrambled eggs made with oil/butter topped with cheese, bacon or ham
- Mashed potatoes with whole milk, butter and gravy
- Chili or refried beans and rice with cheese and sour cream
- Tuna fish / Chicken salad with extra mayonnaise and avocado
- Pasta with alfredo sauce
- Spaghetti with olive oil, red sauce, ground beef with parmesan cheese
- Pudding made with whole milk/half and half topped with whipped cream

Eat calorie dense foods! Make every bite and sip count!



SAMPLE MENU using soft high calorie foods:

Breakfast:

1 cup Oatmeal with 8 oz whole milk, 1 Tbs brown sugar, 1 Tbs butter
(415 calories, 14 grams protein)
4 oz Ensure/Boost Plus (180 calories, 7 grams protein)

Snack:

4 oz pudding made with whole milk (150 calories, 4 grams protein)
4 oz Ensure/Boost Plus (180 calories, 7 grams protein)

Lunch:

½ cup cottage cheese, ½ cup mandarin oranges (260 calories, 28g protein)
2 scrambled eggs cooked with 1 Tbs butter/oil (280 calories, 14 g protein)

Snack:

4 oz Ensure/Boost Plus (180 calories, 7 grams protein)
½ cup canned fruit in syrup with 2 Tbs whipped/heavy cream (280 calories)

Dinner:

1 cup Cream of Chicken Soup, 1 Tbs added oil, 1-2 Tbs powdered milk
(300 calories, 7.5 g protein)
8 oz whole milk (180 calories, 8 grams protein)

Dessert:

1 cup Premium Ice Cream (Haagen-Dazs or Ben and Jerry's) with 1 Tbs
chocolate syrup (300 calories, 5 grams protein)
8 oz whole milk (150 calories, 8 grams protein)

Total Calories for day = 3065

Total protein for day = 108

Other Ideas:

Breakfast: Oatmeal with cream and Yogurt, Banana, Juice

Snack: Canned Fruit in syrup with Cinnamon, and glass of whole milk

Lunch: Chunky Potato Soup, Steamed Vegetables with cheese sauce, Vanilla Pudding

Snack: Fresh Berries or Melon with Whipped Cream

Dinner: Honey glazed salmon with Baked Potato, butter, cheese and Sour Cream, Creamed Corn

Guidelines for Adding Skim Milk Powder to Foods:

Cooked Cereal	Mix equal amounts of skim milk powder and cereal before cooking. Cook as directed.
Mashed Potatoes	Add 1/3 cup skim milk powder to 2 cups mashed potatoes. Use liquid milk to adjust texture.
Sauces, Gravies, Soups, Pudding, Custard	Add ½ cup skim milk powder to each cup liquid milk, water or broth in the recipe.
Milk or Half and Half	Add 1 cup to 1 quart (4 cups) of whole milk. Use for drinking or in all recipes that call for milk.

Recipes to Increase Calories and Protein:

Fortified Milk:

- 1 quart (4 cups) whole milk plus 1 cup nonfat dry milk
- *Single serving:* 1 cup whole milk plus 4 Tbsp nonfat dry milk

Mix until dissolved. Store in refrigerator. (1 cup = 210 calories and 14 grams protein) Use in place of milk in any recipe such as mashed potatoes, puddings, milkshakes, soup cereal, casseroles, mac n cheese.

*Can substitute Half and Half for milk to add even more calories!

High Protein Milkshake:

- 1 cup fortified milk (recipe above)
- ½ to ¾ cup ice cream
- 2 Tbsp flavored syrup (chocolate, caramel strawberry, butterscotch)

Blend until smooth. Recipe provides approximately 450-520 calories and 17-19 grams protein.

Banana Milkshake:

- 1 frozen banana
- 1 cup fortified milk

Blend until smooth. Add vanilla to flavor. May also add peanut butter and chocolate for more calories and protein. Recipe above provides approximately 310 calories and 14 grams protein.

Fortified Peanut Butter Snack Spread:

- 2 Tbsp peanut butter
- 2 Tbsp fortified milk
- Stir in honey to taste

Store in refrigerator. Use on toast, crackers, banana or hot cereal.

Recipe provides approximately 226 calories and 9 grams protein (without honey)



Using Drink Supplements: Ensure or Boost

Choose the “Plus” varieties when purchasing. The “Plus” products have more calories and protein per serving. Sip on the nutrition supplements throughout the day or add to enhance your recipes.

- Add to shakes
- Add to smoothies with your favorite flavored syrups and toppings
- Blend into pancake or waffle batter
- Mix with oatmeal or cream of wheat
- Blend into instant pudding

Try these yummy recipes:

Peanut Butter Fluff

1 bottle Vanilla Ensure/Boost Plus
¼ cup creamy peanut butter
½ 3.4 oz package chocolate instant pudding
½ cup whipped topping

Using an electric mixer, gradually blend Ensure with peanut butter. Add pudding powder and mix until well blended. Fold in whipped topping and serve immediately.

The Special

1 bottle Ensure/Boost Plus
8 oz whole milk
½ cup premium ice cream

Blend and enjoy! Makes ~16 oz.
Half recipe for an 8 oz treat.
Provides approx. 730 calories and 28 grams protein.

Tips To Help With Decreased Appetite:

You may notice you have less of a desire to eat. To increase your appetite, try the following:

- Eat in a pleasant, relaxing environment.
- Make your food look attractive.
- Invite a friend to eat with you.
- Eat a variety of foods. Be sure to include your favorite ones.
- Season your food to your taste.
- Drink liquids between meals so you do not fill up on them at mealtimes.
- Plan to eat smaller nutrient dense portions at mealtimes plus nutritious snacks between.
- Look for ways to relieve your stress.
- Be involved however possible in the activities of your family, friends, and community.

