Recipes

If you're facing challenges that are preventing you from being able to eat certain foods, check out these healthy recipes that can help you optimize nutritional intake while still eating foods you enjoy.

Smoothies

Peanut Butter and Pumpkin Smoothie

This smoothie is a delicious combination of fruit, vegetable, and peanut butter. The banana is a good source of potassium and the pumpkin is a good source of carotenoids. The flaxseeds add additional dietary fiber and healthy fat and the turmeric provides an additional boost of antioxidants. This smoothie also provides a healthy dose of protein with the peanut butter and yogurt. The dairy can be substituted for any non-dairy yogurt (coconut, soy, or almond).

Serves: 1

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Nutrition Information:

Calories 379; Total Fat 17g;
Saturated Fat 6g; Cholesterol 24mg;
Sodium 335mg; Total Carbohydrate 50g;
Dietary Fiber 9g; Protein 14g

Ingredients:

- ¾ cup plain whole milk yogurt
- ½ cup pumpkin puree
- 1 medium banana, frozen
- 1 Tbsp creamy peanut butter
- 2 tsp ground flaxseeds
- ½ tsp ground turmeric

Play-by-Play:

1. Add all ingredients into a blender
2. Blend until combined

Strawberry Cheesecake Smoothie

This delicious smoothie is a healthy way to enjoy a nutrient-dense treat. The cottage cheese and milk are good sources of protein and calcium. The cottage cheese can be substituted for yogurt or a non-dairy yogurt alternative (such as coconut or soy). For added calories, use heavy cream and for added protein, add non-fat dried milk powder or protein powder, as recommended by your healthcare team.

Serves: 1

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Nutrition Information:

Calories 433; Total Fat 15g;
Saturated Fat 6g; Cholesterol 48mg;
Sodium 888 mg; Total Carbohydrate 48g;
Dietary Fiber 5g; Protein 29g

Ingredients:

- 1 cup frozen strawberries
- ¼ cup whole milk cottage cheese
- ½ cup whole milk
- 1 large rectangle (2 squares) graham crackers
- 1 tsp sugar

Play-by-Play:

1. Add all ingredients into a blender
2. Blend until combined

Avocado Blueberry Acai Smoothie

This unique smoothie combines the superfood power of blueberries, chia seeds, and acai with the rich, smooth texture and healthy monounsaturated fat from avocado. For added calories, use heavy cream and for added protein, add non-fat dried milk powder or protein powder as recommended by your healthcare team.

Serves: 1

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Nutrition Information:

Calories 302; Total Fat 18g;
Saturated Fat 3g; Cholesterol 0mg;
Sodium 99mg; Total Carbohydrate 31g;
Dietary Fiber 11g; Protein 7g

Ingredients:

- ½ medium avocado (approx. ¼ cup smashed)
- ½ cup frozen blueberries
- 1 packet (100g) unsweetened acai
- ¾ cup vanilla soy milk
- 1 tsp chia seeds

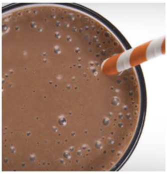
Play-by-Play:

1. Add all ingredients into a blender
2. Blend until smooth and creamy

Cocoa Tofu Smoothie

This smoothie is a rare gem — with a rich source of potassium from the banana and date, and superbly blended protein and calories from the tofu and tahini (sesame paste). For added calories, use heavy cream and for added protein, add non-fat dried milk powder or protein powder as recommended by your healthcare team.

Serves: 1



Prep Time: 5 minutes

Nutrition Information:

Calories 334; Total Fat 13g;
Saturated Fat 3g; Cholesterol 0mg;
Sodium 220mg; Total Carbohydrate 49g;
Dietary Fiber 8g; Protein 17g

Ingredients:

- 1 date, pitted and finely chopped
- 1 banana, sliced into ½-inch chunks and frozen
- ½ cup soft tofu
- ½ cup vanilla soy milk
- 2 Tbsp unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 tsp tahini (sesame paste)
- Pinch of salt

Play-by-Play:

1. Add all ingredients into a blender
2. Blend until smooth and creamy

Breakfast

Almond Butter and Apple Baked Oatmeal

This recipe is a great smooth, soft breakfast option that offers soluble fiber from the oats and apple, and protein and heart-healthy unsaturated fat from the almond butter. It is a great breakfast to make ahead and use throughout the week; it reheats very well. You can also substitute any type of nut butter, non-dairy milk, pears, or canned peaches.

Serves: 12

Prep Time: 15 minutes

Cook Time: 45 minutes

Nutrition Information:

Calories 326; Total Fat 17g;
Saturated Fat 3g; Cholesterol 28mg;
Sodium 152mg; Carbohydrate 38g;
Dietary Fiber 3g; Protein 8g

Ingredients:

- 2 cups oats (old fashioned)
- ¼ cup of brown sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- 1¾ cup whole milk
- 3 Tbsp melted butter, cooled
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 large egg
- ½ cup almond butter
- 2 apples, peeled and grated (Granny Smith, Pink Lady, Honeycrisp, etc.)

Play-by-Play:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F
2. Grease an 8x8 baking dish
3. In a separate bowl, combine dry ingredients (oats, cinnamon, brown sugar, baking powder, and salt)
4. In another bowl, combine milk, egg, melted butter, and vanilla extract
5. Combine the two mixtures in one bowl
6. Add grated apple and almond butter
7. Pour oatmeal into prepared baking dish
8. Bake for 45 minutes until lightly browned on top

Note: To reheat for a healthful breakfast, add a splash of milk and reheat for 30 seconds to 1 minute. Can also be enjoyed cold.

Sweet Potato and Kale Frittata

This easy-to-chew, egg-based meal is full of protein and vegetables, perfect for breakfast, brunch, or even a light dinner. The sweet potatoes are high in beta-carotene, and the kale is high in Vitamin A, Vitamin C, and the flavonoid, quercetin. The eggs, cottage cheese, and optional cheese give this main dish a healthful dose of protein, which is essential for healing and strength during treatment. This frittata is good straight from the oven and an even better leftover.

Serves: 8

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cook Time: 15 minutes

Nutrition Information:

Calories 194; Total Fat 12g;
Saturated Fat 4g; Cholesterol 201mg;
Sodium 359mg; Carbohydrate 10g;
Dietary Fiber 1g; Protein 12g

Ingredients:

- 2 Tbsp canola oil
- ¼ cup diced onions
- 1 sweet potato, peeled and diced
- 1½ cups kale, chopped
- 8 eggs, large
- ½ cup 4% cottage cheese
- ½ tsp salt

- ¼ tsp black pepper
- ¾ cup fontina cheese (optional)

Play-by-Play:

1. Preheat oven to 350°F
2. Using a cast iron skillet or other oven-safe skillet, heat oil over medium heat
3. Add onions and cook until translucent, about 5 minutes
4. Add sweet potatoes, cover, and steam in pan for 10-12 minutes until cooked. Stir occasionally. If sweet potatoes get too browned, reduce heat
5. While the sweet potatoes are cooking, mix the eggs, cottage cheese, salt, and pepper in a separate bowl
6. Once the sweet potatoes are cooked, add kale to pan and steam until soft, about 5 minutes
7. Add egg mixture to the pan and stir to make sure vegetables get distributed
8. Cook on the stove over medium heat until the edges are set, 4-6 minutes
9. If adding cheese, sprinkle on top of the egg mixture
10. Transfer to the preheated oven and cook until eggs are set and top is browned, 14-16 minutes

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Lunch

Avocado and Egg Salad

Egg salad is a versatile food for those who need a high calorie option that is very easy to chew and swallow. The eggs are a good source of high quality protein and the avocados provide a rich source of heart-healthy monounsaturated fat. It can be eaten by itself or added to a sandwich, salad, wrap, crackers, or crudités.

Serves: 3

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Nutrition Information:

Calories 219; Total Fat 18g;
Saturated Fat 3g; Cholesterol 186mg;
Sodium 275mg; Carbohydrate 8g;
Total Fiber 6g; Protein 8g

Ingredients:

- 6 eggs, hard-boiled and chopped
- 3 avocados, halved and pitted
- 2 Tbsp plain Greek yogurt
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 2 tsp fresh dill
- ½ tsp salt

Play-by-Play:

1. Combine all ingredients into a bowl
2. Mash lightly with a fork
3. Serve with bread, crackers, salad, or brown rice

Cream of Asparagus Soup

This creamy delight is bursting with flavors that are easy on a sore mouth or throat. With calories from the avocado and cream and added protein from the beans, this soup is a wonderful smooth and creamy lunch choice. As an option, garnish with sour cream or a drizzle of extra virgin olive oil for added calories; and if you are able to tolerate a slight crunch, add crumbles of cashews, pancetta, or bacon for added calories and protein. Can also be topped with soft, shredded chicken or cubes of hard boiled eggs for a heartier, complete meal.

Serves: 4

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 35 minutes

Nutrition Information:

Calories 257; Total Fat 18g;
Saturated Fat 5g; Cholesterol 20mg;
Sodium 102mg; Carbohydrate 21g;
Total Fiber 7g; Protein 8g

Ingredients:

- 2 bunches of asparagus, cleaned and trimmed
- 1 cup cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 medium onion
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 4 cups chicken broth
- ¼ cup heavy cream
- ⅛ tsp salt
- ⅛ tsp pepper
- ½ tsp thyme
- 1 ripe avocado, diced
- Sour cream (optional garnish)

Play-by-Play:

1. Steam asparagus for 20 minutes, or until fork tender and limp
2. Chop onion
3. Heat olive oil in large sauce pan and sauté onion until translucent, approximately 2-3 minutes
4. Reduce heat to medium and add beans, salt, pepper, and thyme and cook for an additional 5 minutes
5. Add steamed asparagus; when tender, add chicken broth and simmer on low heat for 10 minutes
6. Remove cooked soup and place in bowl. Use immersion blender (or transfer to a food processor) to purée soup. Be careful while pureeing; soup is scalding.
7. Add heavy cream and add back to pot to cook an additional 5 minutes over low heat
8. Allow to cool before serving. Garnish each bowl with cubes of avocado "croutons" (¼ avocado per bowl)
9. As an added touch, garnish with sour cream and a squeeze of lemon juice (if able to tolerate acidity) for added flavor and fresh taste

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Dinner

Macaroni and Cheese Muffins

These muffins are packed with calories and a unique way to enjoy a comforting classic. They are not only soft, moist, and easy to chew, but also made in a manageable portion. The muffins can be made ahead of time and frozen for future use. You can alternate the vegetables and use broccoli, spinach, beans, or sweet potato as an alternative healthful vegetable component. This can be used as a main dish or a side. If you want to make extra-large muffins, use an extra-large cupcake pan that makes six muffins per pan.

Serves: 6-12 (1-2 muffins per person)

Prep Time: 30 minutes

Cook Time: 20 minutes

Nutrition Information:

Calories 208; Total Fat 10g;

Saturated Fat 6g; Cholesterol 33mg,
Sodium 136mg; Carbohydrate 20g;
Total Fiber 1g; Protein 9g

Ingredients:

- 8 oz pasta (suggest elbow, campanelle, or shells)
- 2 cups diced butternut squash
- ½ stick unsalted butter
- ¼ cup flour
- 1 cup whole milk
- 1 cup Gruyere cheese
- 1 cup white cheddar cheese
- Shredded chicken or pork (optional)

Play-by-Play:

1. Preheat oven to 375°F
2. Line muffin pan with foil baking cups and spray each cup with nonstick cooking spray
3. Cook pasta according to package directions. Al dente or softer if needed for chewing or swallowing difficulty
4. Steam butternut squash until tender, about 8 minutes
5. Drain squash and purée with immersion blender or regular blender
6. Melt butter in saucepan over low heat
7. Whisk in flour, stirring constantly to form a roux (mixture should turn light brown), about 3-5 minutes
8. Slowly add milk and whisk firmly until the mixture becomes a thick sauce (béchamel sauce), about 1-2 minutes
9. Mix sauce together with puréed squash and ¾ cup of each cheese (reserve remainder for top)
10. Mix in cooked pasta and the optional shredded meat
11. Spoon mixture into muffin cups, topping each with some remaining cheese
12. Bake in center of oven until browned and bubbling, about 15-20 minutes
13. Cool for 5 minutes before serving

Chicken and Quinoa Stew

This filling stew is a versatile option for lunch or dinner. The chicken and quinoa provide a good dose of protein, and the vegetables provide antioxidants and fiber. This soup is easily adaptable by choosing ground meat or using whatever vegetables you have in the refrigerator. It can even be made vegetarian by switching out the chicken broth and chicken for vegetable broth, extra firm tofu, and white beans.

Serves: 6

Prep Time: 10 minutes

Cook Time: 30 minutes

Nutrition Information:

Calories 388; Total Fat 20g;
Saturated Fat 4g; Cholesterol 90mg,
Sodium 745mg; Carbohydrate 27g;
Total Fiber 4g; Protein 27g

Ingredients:

- 3 Tbsp olive oil
- 1½ lbs. boneless, skinless chicken thighs*, diced
- 1 onion, chopped
- 1½ cups carrots, sliced thin
- 1 celery stalk, diced
- 1½ cups fresh or frozen green beans
- 1 zucchini, chopped
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 1 cup quinoa, dry
- 1 Tbsp Italian seasoning
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp black pepper

* You can use chicken breast if looking for a leaner option or chicken thighs with the skin for added calories from fat to promote weight gain. You may also substitute ground chicken or turkey to make it easier to chew.

Play-by-Play:

1. Heat oil in large Dutch oven over medium high heat
2. Add diced chicken and cook for 5 minutes
3. Add onions and carrots and cook until chicken is done and vegetables are soft
4. Add green beans, zucchini, and chicken broth. Add seasonings and bring to a boil
5. Once boiling, add quinoa. Reduce heat to low and cover. Cook for 15 minutes or until quinoa is done