

Weight Gain the Healthy Way

It may be hard for most people to imagine, but some people have real, often medical reasons to gain weight. There are still others who have experienced “unintentional” weight loss due to a variety of reasons, and need to gain the weight back. People who are too thin can have their own health risks, including weakened immune system, anemia, osteoporosis, and problems with skin, teeth, and hair. If the body mass index (BMI) is below **18.5**, it is considered **UNDERWEIGHT**.

There is a right way and a wrong way to put on extra pounds. Just because someone is underweight, it doesn't mean they have a free pass to eat tons of unhealthy items like fast foods, soda, chips, and sweets.

This is **NOT** a healthy approach to eating for anyone, regardless of body weight. If the client needs to gain weight for medical reasons, always start with the physician’s advice or that of a dietician. They can provide you with the specific guidance right for the client.

Helpful Strategies for Weight Gain

Eat on a schedule and build a routine

Having an eating routine helps set the structure for putting on some pounds. Best to offer food every 3 hours (or eat 6 times a day) in order to add extra calories in a consistent manner.

Focus on Calorie-Dense Foods

People with impaired eating ability or low appetite, often cannot ingest a large volume of food. The strategy for them is focusing on calorie-dense foods to boost the impact of each bite! Some calorie-dense foods that are also high in nutrients include **avocado, healthy oil, cheese, egg, cream, dried fruits, nuts/nut meals, and seeds**. Add these foods to items you or your client already enjoy.

Make Eating A Social Event

Change in appetite is often one of the main reasons why some people lose weight. People with poor appetite eat less often, eat lesser amount, and may not even feel hungry at all to want to eat! To boost the appetite, try making eating a social event by eating in a pleasant environment with family or friends.

Drink A Smoothie or Creamy Soup

People who have a low appetite tend to find drinking easier than chewing. For this reason, many physicians like to prescribe Ensure or Boost to give clients some extra calories and protein. However, a home-made smoothie is just as good, if not more delicious! To increase calories even further, you may also add additional foods like heavy cream, half and half, fruits or peanut butter to the smoothie. People who don’t enjoy cold foods may consider creamy soup that is cream-based or nut-based (e.g cream of corn made with

Drink Enough Water

People who experience loss of appetite often also don’t drink enough water. Be sure to sip some water every hour to keep oneself stay hydrated. To help consume the water, consider flavoring the water with mint, lemon, or berries. Try diluting the juice with water as well.

Get Enough Protein

Similarly not getting enough water, when someone experiences low appetite, the intake of protein also goes down. In addition to adding more calories to food, be sure to add lean protein to the diet including chicken, fish, dairy, nuts, and legumes. Soup is a great way to get fluid and protein into the diet.

Shift the Paradigm

For those who don’t feel like eating, remember getting good nutrition and keeping a healthy weight can help one better cope with the physical and emotional stress that cause the weight loss. So Eat To Live!

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half and half or cashew puree)

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Helpful Food Tips

Foods that boost calories and protein.

Oil and margarine spreads (1 Tb= 100 Calories) Add olive oil, canola oil, peanut oil, walnut oil, or soft margarine spreads to your foods (rice/pasta)

Peanut butter (1 Tb= 200 Calories) Spread peanut butter on toast, muffins, crackers, waffles, pancakes, and fruit slices.

Smoothies (12 oz= ~250 Calories) Make a smoothie with a liquid based like full-fat yogurt, ice cream, or milk, and add fruits, protein powder or peanut butter to it.

Carnation Instant Breakfast drinks (1 pkt or 1/3 cup = ~130 calories) Add Carnation Instant Breakfast Essentials® to 8 oz milk or soy milk. You can add even more calories by blending in ½ and ½ creamer, fruits, or peanut butter.

Added cheese and yogurt (1 slice of cheese/1 egg= 100 calories) Add cheese or egg to dishes like pasta, rice, or vegetables.

Add milk powder (1/3 cup milk powder= 80 calories) Stir nonfat dried-milk powder into soups, milk, casseroles, and hot cereals.

Fruit juices (1 cup= 80 calories) Drink 100% fruit juices instead of water

Avocado and olives (1 avocado= 250 calories) Put avocado and olives on sandwiches.

Added beans or peas (½ cup beans= 100 calories) Mix cooked or canned beans or peas into casseroles, rice dishes, pasta, or salad.

Seeds and Flaxseed meal (¼ cup= 120 calories) Sprinkle seeds or wheat germ on fruit, vegetables, salads, ice cream, pudding, custard, cereal, or yogurt, or add to a muffin mix, pancake batter, waffle batter, or bread dough.

Nutmeal (grinding nuts into fine powders; the most common ones are almond & hazelnut) ¼ cup= 160 calories. Sprinkle almond meal or hazelnut meal on cereal, fruit, vegetables, salads, ice cream, pudding, custard, cereal, or yogurt, or add to a muffin mix, pancake batter, waffle batter, or bread dough.

Dry fruits (1 oz= 100 calories) Include dry fruits in muffins, cookies, breads, cakes, grain dishes, cereals, puddings, and cooked vegetables, such as carrots or sweet potatoes.

Shopping List

- Carnation Instant Breakfast (Vanilla/Chocolate) for smoothie
- Half and Half creamer/ Heavy Cream/Evaporated Milk/Milk Powder for cereal, soup, pudding, and desserts
- Almond Meal for hot cereal or pancake/muffin batters
- Ice Cream: for shake
- Full-Fat Plain Yogurt: for smoothie and fruit
- Shredded Cheese/Full-fat sour cream

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- Gravy/Alfredo Sauce/Condense Cream Soup as sauces
- Frozen Fruits (Mango/Pineapple/Berries) for smoothie
- Avocado for sandwich spread or guacamole
- Butter/Trans-fat free margarine for rice, pasta, vegetables.

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High Calorie Snack Ideas

Foods that boost calories and protein.

Fortified Oatmeal (1 Tb= 100 Calories) Make oatmeal with half and half and trans-fat free margarine and almond meals

Peanut butter Smoothie Add 1 Tb. peanut butter to smoothie

Tropical Smoothie (12 oz= ~250 Calories) Make a smoothie with a liquid based like full-fat yogurt, ice cream, half-and half or full-fat milk. Then add mango and/or pineapple to the smoothie.

4-Layer Bean Dips Make a bean dips with guacamole, refried beans, sour cream and cheese. Serve with tortilla or pita breads.

Caloric Dense Pudding Use instant pudding mix. Instead of add milk, use half and half.

Guacamole (1 avocado= 250 calories) Mashed avocado and add cumin, garlic, cilantro, and lime juice

Power Yogurt (½ cup beans= 100 calories) Served full-fat yogurt with granola, nuts, seeds, and soft fruits.

Super Soup Make a creamed based soup using half and half and add some almond meals to it. To use time, you can use condensed cream soup and add milk or half and half.

Power Potatoes Use half and half cream to make mashed potatoes instead of milk.

Super Bread Pudding With leftover breads, you can make a delicious super bread pudding, using evaporated milk, eggs, butter, sugar, and vanilla extract. Serve with ice cream and fruits.