

# Eating Well in Hospital

Your body needs food and good nutrition to get better in hospital. Being ill may increase your need for protein, calories, and nutrients.

It is important to eat well in the hospital because it can help you:

- Avoid weight and muscle loss
- Get energy
- Improve your balance and lower your risk of falling
- Fight illness
- Heal and recover
- Reduce the number of days you stay in the hospital

## Diets in hospital

In the hospital, your team will order a diet for you based on your needs. This *diet order* will affect the types of foods you see on your meal trays.

You will receive the next day's menu each morning. You can fill out the menu and choose the foods for each meal. People with certain diet orders may not get a menu.

Talk to your healthcare team if you have questions. This includes concerns about your meals, snacks, or if you are not getting a menu.



## Ordering meals in the hospital

- Fill out your menu before lunch to make sure you get the food you want.
- Choose foods from each group on your menu. This makes sure you get a variety of foods and nutrients.
- Write “X 2” on your menu to start getting double portions of any item on the menu.
- If you do not fill out a menu, you will still get all your meals the next day.

Please circle items of your choice	
<b>Friday</b>	<b>Supper</b>
<b>Appetizer</b>	
263 Marinated Veg Salad	
<b>Entrees</b>	
250 Pork Loin Chop	
254 Meat Lasagna	
309 Vegetarian Chana Masala	
<b>Side Dishes</b>	
290 Mixed Vegetables	
302 Broccoli and Cauliflower	
283 Mashed Potato	
287 Steamed Rice	
217 Gravy	
<b>Desserts</b>	
213 Diced Pear Cup	
215 Custard	
502 Key Lime Greek Yogurt	
<b>Beverages</b>	
542 1% Milk	X 2 509 Tea
536 Apple Juice	510 Lemon Tea
538 Coffee	516 Hot water
518 Decaf Coffee	
<b>Condiments</b>	
489 Milkette 2%	527 Mrs. Dash
470 Margarine	X 2 487 Applesauce
547 Pepper	
549 Sugar	
<b>Your Diet Order: Regular (example)</b>	

## Tips for eating well in hospital

The tips below can help you make sure you get enough food while in hospital.

### At mealtime

- Ask for help if you have trouble reaching your meal tray, opening food packages, cutting foods, or eating.
- Ask for larger servings if you are still hungry after meals.
- Add extra condiments and sauce for more flavour and calories. Such as margarine, sour cream, and salad dressing.

### If you have a poor appetite or feel full quickly

- If you have a poor appetite or feel full quickly at meals, it can help to eat small amounts during the day. Write on your menu that you would like snacks between your meals.
- Drink liquids between meals or at the end of your meal. You'll have more room for food.
- Your family and friends can bring your favourite foods from home. Make sure to check with your nursing team first.

### Choose foods higher in protein

Choose foods that are higher in protein at each meal. Foods higher in protein include:

- meat, fish, and poultry
- milk, cheese, and yogurt
- eggs
- beans, lentils, tofu, and soy products
- nut butter

## Nutrition supplements

Nutrition supplements provide extra calories, protein, vitamins, and minerals. They may help if you have a poor appetite, or you are not able to eat all of your meals.

Nutrition supplements come in many forms: drinks, bars, puddings, and powders.

Ask your healthcare team about adding these at meals or snacks.

## Preparing for tests and surgery

There may be times in the hospital where you may not have anything to eat.

### Talk to your team about:

- Foods or drinks that you can have before tests.
- When you can eat if your test or surgery gets cancelled or delayed.
- Starting meals if you have missed meals for more than 1–2 days.



To watch a video on eating well in hospital, go to <https://player.vimeo.com/video/555495429>