

Lupus and eating: Why am I not hungry?

Not feeling hungry (having no appetite) can be a problem when you have lupus. Medicines, tiredness, stress, depression, or a combination of these can change the way you feel about eating.

Probably there will be times when you do feel like eating or when food tastes good. Use these times to eat as much healthy food as you can. If you're not interested in eating now, you might be interested in a little while.

In this hand-out, we'll share some quick and easy ways to increase the healthy food you eat each day. And we'll give you some examples of simple meals and snacks.

How can I get started?

- Eat small amounts often throughout the day. Sometimes you'll hear people refer to this as "grazing."
- Eat by the clock. Set the clock for every 2 to 4 hours. Eat a small snack even if you're not hungry.
- Keep snacks handy for nibbling. Make it easy to snack at any time. Carry a snack pack of easy-to-eat nibbles in your pocket or purse. Ideas for your snack pack include granola, nuts, pretzels, dried fruit, crackers with cheese or peanut butter, or home-made trail mix.
- Eat a snack before going to bed, in addition to your other meals.

Is there a healthy way to increase my calories?

When we talk about the calories in food, what do we mean?

A calorie is a unit of measurement – but it doesn't measure weight or length. A calorie is a unit of energy. When you hear something contains 100 calories, it's a way of describing how much energy your body could get from eating or drinking it.

Here are some ideas for adding healthy calories to the foods you eat each day.

Food product	Amount (each option is about 200 calories)	How to use
Eggs	1 cup chopped, hard-cooked egg 2 ½ whole eggs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add chopped, hard-cooked eggs to salads and dressings, vegetables, and casseroles. ▪ Beat raw eggs into mashed potatoes, sweet potatoes, vegetable purees, and sauces. Be sure to cook these dishes after adding the eggs. ▪ Add extra raw eggs to quiche, pancakes, or french toast. Be sure to cook these well after adding the eggs.
Nuts and nut butters	¼ cup of nuts 2 tablespoons of peanut butter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Snack on nuts. ▪ Spread peanut butter on fruits, such as apples or bananas, or on crackers.
Cheese	2 oz. cheese	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Grate cheese and add to mashed potatoes, other cooked vegetables, casseroles, pasta, rice, and sauces. ▪ Melt on bagels under the broiler. ▪ Eat as a snack with crackers. ▪ Serve with apple pie or other fruit desserts.
Granola	1 ½ oz.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sprinkle on vegetables, yogurt, ice cream, pudding, and fruits. ▪ Mix with nuts and dried fruits for snacks.
Instant Breakfast Powders		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Add to any milk-based beverage or food such as hot chocolate, milk shakes, and instant pudding. ▪ Add to coffee or tea.
Sour Cream	1/3 cup or 6 Tbsp.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Add to cream soups, potatoes, noodle dishes, vegetables, sauces, salad dressings, stews, cooked meats, and fish. ▪ Use as a sauce on cooked meats. ▪ Use as a topping for cakes, fruit, gelatin desserts, breads, and muffins.
Legumes (Beans, Peas, and Lentils)	1 cup	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mash cooked or canned legumes for dips or spreads. ▪ Mix cooked or canned beans in salads, casseroles, pasta, or rice dishes.
Fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3 oz. dried apricots ▪ 10 pitted prunes ▪ 1/3 cup raisins ▪ ½ cup dried cranberries ▪ 7 pitted dates ▪ 4 mission figs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cook and serve for meals or snacks. ▪ Add to rice, grain dishes, cereals, puddings and stuffing. ▪ Combine with cooked vegetables, such as carrots, sweet potatoes, and squash. ▪ Combine with nuts or granola for snacks.

When you're preparing your food, you might also try to:

- Add a breaded coating to meats and vegetables.
- Fry or sauté meats and vegetables.
- Be generous with the amount of sauce or gravy added to pasta, vegetables, and meat.
- Choose creamed, buttered, and au gratin (food sprinkled with seasoned breadcrumbs and cheese) recipes.

How many calories should I have each day?

Try for 3,000 calories. Here's an example of how you might plan your meals:

Breakfast	450 – 500 calories
Snack	300 calories
Light Meal	550 – 650 calories
Snack	300 calories
Main Meal	650 – 750 calories
Snack	300 calories

Here's a sample meal plan:

Breakfast	<p>Creamy oatmeal (cooked in milk):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ½ cup uncooked oatmeal ▪ 1 cup whole or 2% milk ▪ 2 Tbsp. raisins ▪ 2 tsp. brown sugar <p>1 cup orange juice or whole fruit (fresh, canned, frozen)</p>	<p>Egg Sandwich:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Biscuit, roll, or 2 slices of bread ▪ 1 egg ▪ 1 slice cheese ▪ 2 slices bacon or ham <p>1 cup orange juice or whole fruit (fresh, canned, frozen)</p>	<p>Cold Cereal:</p> <p>1 ½ cups ready-to-eat cereal</p> <p>1 medium banana</p> <p>1 cup milk</p> <p>1/2 cup orange juice</p>
Snack	<p>2 oz. cheese with ½ cup wheat crackers</p>	<p>2 cups milk mixed with instant breakfast powder</p>	<p>2 Tbsp. peanut butter with 1 apple sliced or 1 banana, or 1 cup carrot/celery sticks</p>
Light Meal	<p>Sandwich:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 4 oz. protein ▪ 2 slices whole wheat bread ▪ Mayonnaise or salad dressing ▪ 1 slice cheese ▪ Lettuce/tomato <p>1 cup fruit</p> <p>1 cup whole milk or yogurt</p>	<p>Three-bean chili on baked potato:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 cup chili ▪ 1 large baked potato ▪ ¼ cup shredded cheese <p>½ cup whole fruit</p> <p>1 cup milk or yogurt</p>	<p>Soup and sandwich:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 cup soup ▪ 1 slice whole wheat bread ▪ 2 oz. meat, poultry, fish ▪ 1 slice cheese ▪ Lettuce/tomato ▪ Mayonnaise or dressing <p>1 cup fruit</p> <p>6 saltine crackers</p> <p>1 cup milk or yogurt</p>
Snack	<p>2 hard boiled eggs</p> <p>½ cup wheat crackers</p>	<p>¼ cup nuts with ½ cup raisins or dried cranberries</p>	<p>½ cup bean dip</p> <p>1 ½ cups tortilla chips</p>

Main Meal	6 oz. meat, fish or poultry ½ cup pasta, potato, or rice 1 cup cooked vegetable w/1 tbsp. olive or canola oil 1 slice bread or dinner roll 3 cups lettuce salad with 2 Tbsp. dressing	Spaghetti with meat sauce and beans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 ½ cups cooked spaghetti ▪ 1 cup meat sauce ▪ ½ cup beans 1 cup cooked vegetable with 1 Tbsp. olive or canola oil 1 slice bread or dinner roll 3 cups lettuce salad with 2 Tbsp. dressing	Pizza with sausage & vegetables: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2 slices thin crust pizza with sausage and 2 choices of vegetable toppings 3 cups lettuce salad with 2 Tbsp. dressing
Snack	2 slices of bread or tortillas with 2 slices of cheese, melted	6 oz. yogurt or 4% cottage cheese with ½ cup fruit (fresh, frozen, canned)	6 oz. pudding with ¼ cup granola

There's no such thing as a one-size-fits-all "lupus diet." But that doesn't mean that a healthy diet isn't important.

You need to eat meals that are balanced and nutritious and reduce inflammation. It's not hard, but it may be a different way of thinking than you're used to.

Having good eating habits will help your body remain as healthy as possible.

If you need help managing your weight or making healthy food choices, please talk with your doctor.

What's the doctor's phone number? (585) 486-0901