

GAINING WEIGHT: IT'S HARDER THAN YOU MAY THINK!

The Quest for Weight Gain

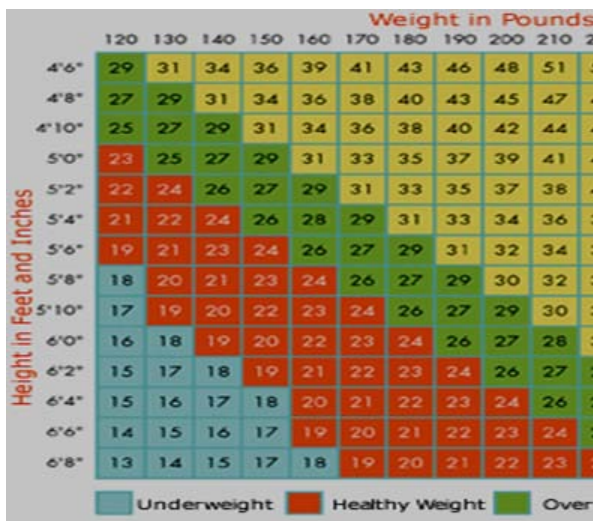
In a society that suffers from an epidemic of obesity in spite of societal pressure to slim down, it may be hard to believe that there are actually people who struggle to gain needed body weight. Sympathy is hard to come by for those who can't gain weight. The common retort to the expressed need may be "Here, have some of mine" or "just eat everything I'm NOT supposed to eat!"

The need to gain weight may be as simple as the need to eat larger food portions and more calorie-dense foods to keep up with a high metabolism. A higher level of physical activity, from competitive sports to transportation, biped-style, will crank up the body's need for energy and nutrients. Sometimes, the higher nutrient and energy needs come from metabolic disturbances including malabsorption from stress, gastritis, or food intolerances as well as Crohn's Disease or Colitis. Most of us take our appetites for granted, along with most of our body functions. When an appetite is missing or nausea persists, food can be a tough sell.

A BMI (body mass index) of less than 18.4 can signify an underweight or compromised health status. BMIs do not account for bone frame or muscle mass. Remember that body weight is merely one objective indicator for assessing overall health.

Concerns Associated With Low Body Weight

- Decreased bone density and increased risk of fractures
- Loss of menstruation in women, increasing risk of bone mineral loss and healthy hormone balance
- Muscle wasting, including heart muscle and lack of strength, stamina
- Decrease in immunity to infection



https://vic.pvhs.org/webpix/gastric/BMI_Chart.gif

Common Contributors to Weight Loss

- Routine, daily strenuous exercise, such as speed-walking across campus, bicycle riding, dance or other sports activities requiring frequent practice.
- Insufficient meal time or sleep allotment.
- Stress and unrealistic demands on the body and mind (some people respond to stress by eating, while others stop eating when faced with a demanding, performance-type of schedule).
- Low food intake and/ or poor eating habits.
- Diarrhea; nausea & vomiting; inadequate digestion.
- Hyperthyroidism or inherited high metabolism.
- Eating Disorders.
- Excessive caffeine intake or habitual smoking.
- Excessive intake of some drugs including amphetamines, alcohol.
- Diabetes or other endocrine disorder.
- Depression, grief, or anxiety.
- HIV or AIDS
- Cancers

[Note: http://www.wrongdiagnosis.com/symptoms/weight_loss/causes.htm lists 1690 causes of weight loss. If you have unintentional weight loss that persists more than a few weeks, make an appointment with your primary care physician.]

Ideas for Healthy Weight Gain

- Start each new day with a balanced breakfast, including whole grains, fruits and perhaps a protein source. Common protein sources include cheeses, yogurt, milk, eggs, lean meats (ham, fresh pork loin, and turkey), peanut butter, cream cheese and nuts.
- Include purposeful snacks in your day. Identify foods which offer both energy (calories) and are rich in needed nutrients.
- Avoid skipping meals.
- Make time to relax and rest weekly, if not daily. Some of us need to learn to slow down, both with our schedules and our racing minds. Doing so may improve your metabolism and the body's utilization of nutrients consumed.
- Use more generous servings of heart healthy fats such as canola oil, nuts, avocados, olives & olive oil.
- Eat larger servings. This will be a gradual change in your meal habits.
- Despite your need for calories, avoid routine consumption of caffeinated, carbonated sweet drinks and "sweets". A dessert is best to eat at the end of a meal so that your body will first receive foods rich in essential vitamins, minerals, and phytonutrients.
- Eat a variety of foods and serve them at appetizing temperatures.
- As much as possible, eat meals with others instead of alone. Mealtime can be an enjoyable time of sharing. Eating alone can also dampen one's appetite.
- For unexplainable weight loss, check in with a physician.

Nutrient and Calorie-Rich Recipes

Cheese Pie

Yields 6 servings from 1 pie.

1/6 pie wedge: 350 kcals, 13 grams protein

Ingredients:

1 pie shell
3 eggs, slightly beaten
2 c. warm whole milk
½ tsp. salt and pinch of pepper
4 oz. grated Swiss cheese
Pinch of nutmeg & 4 Tbsp. margarine

Baking Instruction:

- Partially bake the pie shell at 375° F for 15 minutes.
- Combine eggs, milk, salt, and pepper.
- Spread the cheese evenly in the bottom of the pie shell and pour the milk mixture over it. Sprinkle the top with nutmeg & dot with margarine.
- Place pie on a cookie sheet and bake for 30 minutes at 375 °F or until pie is set

Hint: Increase protein & calcium by adding dry milk powder to whole milk. Substitute cream or half-n-half for milk to increase calories. Add 1 cup of leftover or cooked , drained vegetables to the filling.

Lemon Sunshine Chicken

Yields 4 servings

1 Serving: 450 kcals, 37 grams protein

Ingredients:

1 chicken fryer or equivalent, skinned, cut up and seasoned to preference
10 oz. jar of peach preserves
2 tbsp prepared mustard
½ tsp. ginger
2 tsp. grated lemon peel and 1/3 c. lemon juice
1 fresh lemon, thinly sliced

Baking Instruction:

- Preheat oven to 350° F and placed skinned chicken pieces in shallow ungreased baking dish.
- Combine preserves, mustard, ginger, lemon peel, and lemon juice in saucepan. Heat until mixture begins to boil, stirring constantly.
- Pour sauce over chicken and bake for 1 hour, basting, every 15 minutes with sauce. Garnish with lemon slices during last 15 minutes.

Sweet Potato Puffs

Yields 4 puffs

1 Puff: 145 kcals, 3 grams protein & 1765 RE Vitamin A

Ingredients:

1 lb can of sweet potatoes, drained (may use fresh sweet potato & cook until tender)
½ c. whole milk or light cream (may add dry milk powder to increase protein and calcium)
1/4 tsp each of salt, cinnamon, ginger and nutmeg
½ c. corn flake crumbs

Baking Instruction:

- Preheat oven to 350° F and mash sweet potatoes with milk or cream and spices. Whip until smooth.
- Divide into four equal amounts and shape into balls.
- Roll in corn flake crumbs and bake about 15 minutes.

Corn Pudding

Yields four ½ c. servings

1 Serving: 265 kcals and 6 grams protein

Ingredients:

2 c. corn, canned, frozen or fresh cooked

1 egg, slightly beaten

1 c. half and half cream

½ tsp. salt + ¼ tsp. garlic powder and 1/8 tsp. pepper

4 tbsp. margarine

Baking Instruction:

- Preheat oven to 325° F. and mix corn, egg, cream, and seasonings together in 1-qt. baking dish.
- Place baking dish in shallow pan of water in oven. Bake for 45 minutes or until pudding is set.

Hint: May substitute cream style corn.

Raspberry Cream

Yields 3, 1-cup servings

1 cup: 390 kcals, 7g protein and 16 mg Vitamin C

Ingredients:

3 oz. package of raspberry-flavored gelatin

½ c. water

1 pint vanilla ice cream

10 oz. package of frozen raspberries, thawed

6 Tbsp. whipped cream

Instructions:

- Thaw ice cream on counter for 30 minutes. Dissolve gelatin in boiling water.
- Add ice cream to warm gelatin mixture and stir until dissolved. Add raspberries and mix well.
- Refrigerate until set (approximately 2 hours)
- When ready to serve, spoon into glassed and top with 2 Tbsp. of cream

Hint: May substitute your favorite frozen fruit for raspberries and/ or substitute chocolate ice cream for a chocolate and raspberry cream.

Peanut Butter Chocolate Chip Cake

Yields 12 servings (either 1/12th of cake or 2 cupcakes)

1 Serving: 490 kcals, 11 g. protein and 125 mg calcium

Ingredients:

1 package chocolate cake mix

1 cup peanut butter

1 ¾ c. whole milk

3 eggs

1 c. chocolate chips

Instructions:

- Place cake mix, peanut butter, milk and eggs in electric mixer bowl. Mix on low speed for 1 minute. Scrape sides of bowl and mix at medium high speed for 3 minutes. Stir in chocolate chips.
- Grease two 9-inch cake pans or 24 cupcake tins. Divide batter into pans.
- Bake at 350⁰ F. Cupcakes bake for 20-25 minutes; cake bakes for 40-45 minutes.
- Remove from oven and allow to stand for 10 minutes before serving.

Hint: Frost with whipped cream, ready-made frosting or our own frosting recipe. Serve with fruit topping and ice cream.

Recipes taken from *Pass the Calories, Please* by Gail Farmer, MS, RD published by the American Dietetic Association. Go to www.eatright.org or other reputable book sites to purchase.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- <http://www.healthy.net/scr/Article.asp?Id=1270&xcntr=2>
- http://www.wrongdiagnosis.com/symptoms/weight_loss/causes.htm
- <http://www.eatright.org>
- <http://www.healthy.net/index.asp> ("Nutritional Programs for Weight Gain")
- http://www.med.umich.edu/1libr/aha/aha_healgain_crs.htm
- <http://www.mypyramid.gov/>