



## Wellness Center

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## HEALTHY WEIGHT GAIN

Healthy weight gain may be recommended if you are below a healthy weight and want to feel better, want to build strength and muscle for improved athletic performance, or have had unintentional weight loss after stress or illness. Gaining weight takes time and students should strive for a recommended weight gain goal of 0.5-1 pound per week. When trying to gain weight it is important to choose whole, high quality food options frequently throughout each day. Weight gain requires having a daily caloric surplus. First, make sure you are meeting your daily energy needs and then slowly increase daily calorie intake over time.

To estimate your daily energy needs, go to <https://www.choosemyplate.gov/resources/MyPlatePlan> (external link to the MyPlate government website, caloric needs calculator). Remember that this calculation is a recommendation and exact individual needs may vary and needs vary day to day.

### Nutrition Tips

- Try to eat five to six times a day. Schedule meal and snack times throughout each day. Try to prepare meals in advance. Keep snacks handy so that you can eat while walking between classes or during online classes.
- Choose foods that you like so meals and snacks are exciting.
- Drink fluids before or after meals, but not with them to leave more room for food.
- Eat full-fat foods; avoid “lite” or “low-calorie” versions of foods.
- Drink calories with healthy smoothies. For a high protein smoothie: mix fruits, seeds, nut butters, oats, and dairy/dairy alternatives. You could also consider adding a protein powder supplement.
- Try to add more high-calorie foods to diet. High calorie foods include the following:
  - Avocado, eggs, nuts, nut butters, whole milk, chicken, salmon, yogurt, cheese, whole wheat grains/breads, granola, beans, potatoes, tofu, olive oil, oats, dried fruit, and dark chocolate
- Consider pairing protein foods with carb foods; some examples of how to eat more nutrient dense food pairings:
  - Add peanut butter on apples and bananas
  - Add cheese and avocado on top of pasta or soups
  - Make oatmeal, cereal, or scrambled eggs with higher protein/higher fat milk (i.e., soy milk or whole milk)
  - Add healthy dressings and sauces like tahini dressing or cashew sauce to meals
- Try to increase appetite before mealtimes by engaging in small amounts of physical activity, like walking or yoga.

If you are struggling to gain weight or experiencing frequent nausea, please seek the guidance of a registered dietitian. The dietitian can help you develop an eating plan that will help you gain weight in a healthy way with the foods you enjoy. To schedule an appointment, call Dial-A-Nurse at 773-508-8883 or book online at <https://www.luc.edu/wellness/nutrition/>.