



# Oncology Cookbook

## Nutrition Tips and Recipes During Cancer Treatment

Nutrition and Food Services Healthy Teaching Kitchen



**VA**



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of Veterans Affairs

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# My VA Contact Information

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**VA Medical Center Location Name and Address:**

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# Table of Contents

This cookbook has been created to support you with good nutrition throughout your treatment. Nutrition plays an important role in supporting your energy level, strength, and tolerance to treatment.

Many people undergoing cancer treatment may have symptoms that make eating a challenge. These can include loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, constipation, sore mouth, taste changes, or a combination of these.

This cookbook will provide you with tips to ease these side effects and nourishing recipes to help you meet your nutrition needs and feel your best.

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# Cooking References



# Cooking Safely

Did you know that 1 in 6 Americans will get sick from food poisoning this year? Food poisoning not only sends 128,000 Americans to the hospital each year, it can also have long-term health effects.

The keys to basic food safety are cooking it to the right temperature and handling it properly. Follow these guidelines to keep you, your family, and your guests safe.

For more information on these and other food safety guidelines, please visit [www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov).

## Practice Good Hygiene

Use hot water and regular soap to wash your hands. Scrub the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Try humming the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice. Rinse hands, then dry with a clean towel.

Wash your hands often, especially during these key times when germs can spread:

- Before, during, and after preparing food
- Before serving food or eating
- After handling raw meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, or their juices
- After using the toilet, touching garbage, touching an animal or picking something up off the floor
- After changing a diaper or taking care of someone who is sick
- After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing

## Cook to Safe Temperatures

Cook all food to the minimum safe internal temperatures on the chart above. Use a food thermometer to be sure your food is safe. When you think your food is done, place the food thermometer in the thickest part of the food, making sure not to touch bone, fat, or gristle.

Safe Internal Food Temperatures	
Poultry	
Whole or Pieces	165°F
Ground	165°F
Beef, Pork, and Lamb	
Steaks/Roasts/Chops	145°F
Ground	160°F
Pre-Cooked Ham	140°F
Seafood	
Fish Fillet/Whole Fish	145°F
Shrimp/Lobster/Crab	Cook until flesh is pearly and opaque
Leftovers and Casseroles	165°F
Egg Dishes	160°F

## Separate Hazardous Foods

Use one cutting board for hazardous foods (e.g. raw meat, poultry, seafood, eggs) and another for non-hazardous foods (e.g. fresh produce, cooked foods, foods that won't be cooked).

Use separate plates and utensils for cooked and raw foods. Use hot, soapy water to wash all plates, utensils, and cutting boards that touched hazardous foods before using them again.

## Refrigerate and Freeze Properly

Your refrigerator should be set to 40°F or below and your freezer to 0°F or below. Use a refrigerator and/or freezer thermometer to be sure. Place raw meat, poultry, and seafood on plates, in containers, or in sealed plastic bags. Freeze them if you're not planning to use them within a few days. Freezing does not kill harmful germs, but it does keep food safe until you can cook it.

## Avoid the Danger Zone

Bacteria that cause food poisoning grow quickest between 40°F and 140°F, also known as the danger zone. Never leave perishable foods at room temperature for more than two hours. If the food is exposed to temperatures above 90°F, refrigerate it within one hour.

If you're not serving food right after cooking, keep it out of the temperature danger zone by using a heat source like a chafing dish, warming tray, or slow cooker. Cold foods can be kept on ice or in a cooler for longer serving times.

Never thaw or marinate foods at room temperature. The safest way to thaw or marinate is in the refrigerator. Leftovers should be placed in small shallow containers and refrigerated promptly to allow for quick cooling.

## Wash Produce

Cut away any damaged or bruised areas on fruits and vegetables, then rinse under warm running water. Scrub firm produce like melons, potatoes, or cucumbers with a clean produce brush. Air dry or pat dry with a paper towel or clean cloth towel. Don't rinse raw meat, poultry, seafood, or shell eggs.

## When In Doubt, Throw It Out

The germs that make you sick are not always the same ones that cause food to go bad. Don't use smell, taste, and appearance as your only guides. Use the storage times on the table above to guide you. If you're still not sure whether a food item is safe, it's better to be safe than sorry and throw it away.

Safe Food Storage Times (Refrigerated at 40°F or Below)	
Raw Poultry	
Whole, Pieces, or Ground	1-2 days
Raw Beef, Pork, and Lamb	
Steaks/Roasts/Chops	3-5 days
Pre-Cooked Ham	3-4 days
Ground	1-2 days
Stew Meat	1-2 days
Raw Seafood	
Fish Fillet/Whole Fish	1-2 days
Shrimp/Lobster/Crab	1-2 days
Raw Eggs	
In shell	3-5 weeks
Out of Shell	2-4 days
Cooked Leftovers	
Beef, Pork, and Lamb	3-4 days
Poultry	3-4 days
Seafood	3-4 days
Egg Dishes	3-4 days
Hard-Cooked Eggs, In Shell	7 days
Vegetables and Fruit	5-7 days
Soups and Stews	3-4 days



# Measurements and Abbreviations

## Common Abbreviations

c — cup  
 Tbsp — tablespoon  
 tsp — teaspoon  
 oz — ounce (usually weight, unless referring to a liquid)  
 fl oz — fluid ounces  
 lb — pound  
 g — gram  
 mg — milligram  
 ~ — about/roughly

## Volume Conversions

3 teaspoons = 1 tablespoon  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoon = 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoons  
 2 tablespoons = 1 (fluid) ounce =  $\frac{1}{8}$  cup  
 4 tablespoons = 2 (fluid) ounces =  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup  
 5 tablespoons + 1 teaspoon =  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup  
 1 cup = 8 (fluid) ounces  
 2 cups = 16 (fluid) ounces = 1 pint  
 4 cups = 32 (fluid) ounces = 1 quart  
 2 quarts = 64 (fluid) ounces =  $\frac{1}{2}$  gallon  
 16 cups = 128 (fluid) ounces = 1 gallon

## Fresh to Dried Herbs Ratios

### Dried leafy herbs (e.g. oregano, basil, tarragon)

1 tablespoon fresh = 1 teaspoon dried

### Dried ground herbs and spices (e.g. ginger, garlic, ground thyme)

4 parts fresh = 1 part dried

### Dried leafy herb to dried ground herb

1 teaspoon dried leaf =  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon ground herb

## Reducing Recipes for Fewer Servings

When the Recipe Says...	To Make Half, Use...	To Make a Third, Use...
$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	2 tablespoons	1 tbsp + 1 tsp
$\frac{1}{3}$ cup	2 tbsp + 2 tsp	1 tbsp + $2\frac{1}{4}$ tsp
$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup	2 tbsp + 2 tsp
$\frac{2}{3}$ cup	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup	3 tbsp + $1\frac{1}{2}$ tsp
$\frac{3}{4}$ cup	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup + 2 tbsp	$\frac{1}{4}$ cup
1 cup	$\frac{1}{2}$ cup	$\frac{1}{3}$ cup
1 tablespoon	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon	1 teaspoon
1 teaspoon	$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon	$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon
$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon	$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon	Scant $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp
$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon	$\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon	Scant $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp
$\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon	Dash	Pinch

# Recipes to Ease Appetite Loss



## Tips for Managing Appetite Loss

Loss of appetite is a common side effect of chemotherapy, radiation, and cancer itself. Side effects of treatments such as loss of taste and smell, fatigue, nausea, and stress may also lead to decreased appetite.

It is important to try to eat well during treatment. Your body needs calories and protein to help keep your weight and energy up. Maintaining strength can also make your treatments easier to tolerate.

If you are struggling with a loss of appetite, consider these tips to help:

### Adjust How Much and How Often You Eat

- Eat small meals more often. Try to eat a small amount every 2-3 hours.
- Try to eat larger meals when you feel the best. Often, people feel better earlier in the day or after a nap when they are rested.
- Make every bite count by choosing items high in calories and protein.
- If you have followed specific diet restrictions in the past, talk with your healthcare provider about whether you need to continue these at this time (e.g. low cholesterol, carbohydrate controlled).

### Make Eating Easier

- Have meals that are easy to prepare such as sandwiches or ready-to-eat items.
- Have snacks on hand and close by during the day such as peanut butter and crackers, granola bars, yogurt, cottage cheese, pudding, hard-boiled eggs, nuts, and fruit.

### Keep Mealtimes Enjoyable

- Choose favorite foods, order takeout or go out to a favorite restaurant, listen to music, or eat outside when the weather is nice.
- Use seasonings to enhance flavor, if tolerated.

### Get Moving

- Taking a walk in the fresh air can help improve appetite.

## Look for Alternatives

- Choose items that are room temperature or cold to reduce the smell of foods.
- Avoid drinking liquids with meals, unless they are needed for dry mouth or other swallowing problems.
- If you do not feel like you can eat solid food, consider sipping on nutritional drinks, smoothies, creamy or pureed soups, juices, milk, and other liquids that provide a source of calories and nutrition.

## Keep Track

- Keep a journal to track how much you eat and drink each day.
- Make sure your bowels are moving regularly as constipation can contribute to poor appetite.
- Weigh yourself at least once a week. **Call your healthcare team** if you are losing more than a half pound of weight per week.

## Building High Calorie-High Protein Smoothies and Shakes

Smoothies can be a delicious, fast, and nutritious meal or snack option. The following tips will ensure that your smoothie is nutritionally balanced, with adequate calories and protein. Smoothies can be made in a standing blender, single-serving blender or handheld (immersion) blender. Simply add the ingredients and blend until smooth.

### 1. Add a Base (½-1 cup, based on desired consistency; one type or a combination)

Examples: Milk, non-dairy milk alternative (e.g. soy milk, almond milk, rice milk, coconut milk), coconut water, water, 100% fruit juice. For extra calories, choose whole milk, half and half, or canned coconut milk

### 2. Add Fresh, Frozen, or Canned Fruit (1 cup; one type or a combination)

Examples: Apple, banana, blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, cherries, grapes, kiwi, mango, melon, orange, papaya, peach, pear, pineapple. You can also add fresh or frozen spinach or kale for a nutrition boost.

### 4. Add a Protein Source (choose 1)

Examples: ½ cup cottage cheese, ½ cup Greek yogurt, ½ cup silken tofu, ½ cup cooked lentils, ½ cup cooked or canned beans (drained and rinsed), or 1 scoop protein powder

### 5. Add Fat with Fiber (choose 1, or a combination of 2 using the smaller amounts)

Examples: ¼-½ avocado, 1-2 tablespoons chia seeds, 1-2 tablespoons nut butter or seed butter (e.g. peanut butter, almond butter, sunflower butter), 1-2 tablespoons ground flax seeds (flax meal), 1-2 tablespoons wheat germ

## Sample Smoothie Recipes

- **Orange Creamsicle** – ¼ cup milk, ¼ cup orange juice, 1 peeled orange, ½ cup Greek yogurt, 1 tablespoon chia seeds, ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract, 3 ice cubes
- **Peanut Butter Dream** – ½ cup soy milk, 1 banana, ½ cup spinach, ½ cup tofu, 2 tablespoons peanut butter, 1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder

The page features a central text area with a light pink background, flanked by vertical images of strawberries. The left image shows whole strawberries on a wooden surface, while the right image shows sliced strawberries. The title 'Strawberry-Vanilla Milkshake' is prominently displayed at the top in a large, dark blue font.

# Strawberry-Vanilla Milkshake

Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 0 minutes | Total: 5 minutes

Yield: 1 serving | Serving Size: 1 milkshake

## Ingredients

- 1 cup milk of choice (dairy or non-dairy)
- ½ cup vanilla ice cream
- ½ cup fresh or frozen strawberries
- 2 tablespoons dry milk powder
- ¼ teaspoon vanilla extract

## Directions

1. Add the milk, ice cream, strawberries, dry milk powder, and vanilla extract to a blender.
2. Blend until smooth, about 2-3 minutes. You may need to stop and scrape the sides halfway through, depending on the strength of your blender.
3. Serve immediately.

## Recipe Notes

- This milkshake can be made with a variety of fruit such as mango, banana, raspberries, or blueberries.
- Protein powder can be substituted for the dry milk powder.
- If the milkshake is too thick, add 1-3 tablespoons of water or milk and continue blending.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 365 | Total Fat: 16 g | Saturated Fat: 10 g  
Sodium: 215 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 38 g | Dietary Fiber: 1.5 g | Protein: 16 g**

Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)



# Peanut Butter-Banana Milkshake

Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 0 minutes | Total: 5 minutes

Yield: 1 serving | Serving Size: 1 milkshake

## Ingredients

- 1 cup milk of choice (dairy or non-dairy)
- ½ cup vanilla or chocolate ice cream
- ½ banana
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter
- 3-4 ice cubes (optional)

## Directions

1. Add the milk, ice cream, banana, peanut butter, and ice cubes (if using) to a blender.
2. Blend until smooth, about 2-3 minutes. You may need to stop and scrape the sides halfway through, depending on the strength of your blender.
3. Serve immediately.

## Recipe Notes

- Another nut or seed butter (e.g. peanut butter, sunflower butter, almond butter, cashew butter) can be substituted for the peanut butter.
- Consider adding 1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder for extra chocolate flavor.
- If the milkshake is too thick, add 1-3 tablespoons of water or milk and continue blending.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 550 | Total Fat: 34 g | Saturated Fat: 14 g  
Sodium: 305 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 47 g | Dietary Fiber: 4 g | Protein: 20 g**

Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)

# Island-Style Green Smoothie

**Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 0 minutes | Total: 5 minutes**

**Yield: 2 servings | Serving Size: 1½ cups**

## Ingredients

- 1½ cups milk of choice (dairy or non-dairy)
- 1 cup fresh spinach or ½ cup frozen spinach
- 1 cup frozen mango or pineapple cubes
- 1 banana, peeled
- ¼ avocado, peeled and pitted
- 3-4 ice cubes
- Pinch cinnamon or ground ginger

## Directions

1. Add the milk, spinach, mango or pineapple, banana, avocado, ice cubes, and cinnamon or ginger to a blender.
2. Blend until smooth, about 2-3 minutes. You may need to stop and scrape the sides halfway through, depending on the strength of your blender.
3. Serve immediately.

## Recipe Notes

- Add a 1-3 teaspoons of a sweetener such as honey or maple syrup if more sweetness is desired.
- If the smoothie is too thick, add 1-3 tablespoons of water or milk and continue blending.



**Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 240 | Total Fat: 9 g | Saturated Fat: 3.5 g  
Sodium: 100 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 35 g | Dietary Fiber: 4.5 g | Protein: 8 g**

**Adapted from Ventray.com | Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO**

**For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)**

# Energy Balls

Prep: 10 minutes | Chill: 1 hour | Total: 1 hour 10 minutes

Yield: 16 servings | Serving Size: 1 energy ball

## Ingredients

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup old-fashioned (rolled) oats

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup ground flaxseed (flax meal)

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup nut or seed butter (e.g. peanut butter, sunflower butter, almond butter, cashew butter)

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup honey

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup dark chocolate or semi-sweet chocolate chips

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon vanilla extract

## Directions

1. Add the oats, flaxseed, nut or seed butter, honey, chocolate chips, and vanilla to a medium mixing bowl.
2. Mix well. It may be easier to mix with clean hands rather than a spoon or a spatula.
3. Roll into 16 balls that are about the same size.
4. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour.
5. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator.

## Recipe Notes

- These energy balls will keep in an airtight container in the refrigerator for 1 week.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving:** Calories: 100 | Total Fat: 6 g | Saturated Fat: 1.5 g  
Sodium: 40 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 10 g | Dietary Fiber: 1.5 g | Protein: 3 g

Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)



# Blueberry Protein Pancakes

Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 10 minutes | Total: 15 minutes

Yield: 3 servings | Serving Size: 3 pancakes

## Ingredients

1 banana, peeled  
4 eggs  
1 tablespoon ground flaxseed (flax meal)  
1 tablespoon baking powder  
¼ teaspoon cinnamon  
Pinch salt  
1 cup quick (minute) oats  
1/2 cup fresh or frozen blueberries  
Maple syrup, yogurt, and/or applesauce (optional)

## Directions

1. In a medium mixing bowl, mash the banana with a fork.
2. Add the eggs, flaxseed, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt. Whisk together with the fork until well combined.
3. Add the oats and stir to combine.
4. Fold in the blueberries.
5. Heat a medium or large nonstick skillet over medium heat.
6. Working ¼ cup at a time and around the perimeter of the skillet, portion the batter into the pan, leaving at least ½ inch between each portion of batter.
7. Cook on the first side until bubbles form and pop on the top surface, about 3-4 minutes.
8. Flip all of the pancakes over and cook on the other side until golden-brown, about 1-2 minutes.
9. Repeat Steps 6-8 with any remaining batter.
10. Serve warm, topping with maple syrup, yogurt, and/or applesauce as desired.

## Recipe Notes

- If desired, the ingredients in Steps 1-3 can be combined in a blender or with an electric mixer. Then, fold in the blueberries and proceed with the rest of the recipe as written.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 200 | Total Fat: 7 g | Saturated Fat: 2 g  
Sodium: 215 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 25 g | Dietary Fiber: 4 g | Protein: 10 g**

Adapted from PinchofYum.com | Submitted by Robin LaCroix  
For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)



# Chocolate Tofu Mousse with Berries

Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 5 minutes | Chill: 1 hour | Total: 1 hour 10 minutes

Yield: 4 servings | Serving Size:  $\frac{1}{3}$  cup mousse with  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup berries

## Ingredients

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup dark chocolate or semi-sweet chocolate chips

8 ounces tofu (silken or soft tofu works best), drained if packed in liquid (about 1 cup)

1 teaspoon unsweetened cocoa powder

1 tablespoon milk (dairy or non-dairy)

1-2 tablespoons maple syrup or honey, to taste

$\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon vanilla extract

Pinch salt

1 cup fresh berries, trimmed and sliced if needed

## Directions

1. Fill a medium saucepan with an inch or two of water. Bring the water to a simmer over medium-high heat.
2. Add the chocolate chips a heatproof metal or glass bowl and set the bowl over the pot with the simmering water. The bottom of the bowl sit just inside the opening of the saucepan and should not touch the water. If it does, pour out water until it doesn't.
3. Let the chocolate melt, stirring occasionally with a heat-resistant spoon or spatula, until fully melted. Remove the bowl from the saucepan as soon as the last piece melts.
4. Place the tofu, cocoa powder, milk, maple syrup or honey, vanilla, salt, and melted chocolate into a blender or food processor. Blend until very smooth.
5. Place in the refrigerator until fully set, at least 1 hour. This mousse will keep in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.
6. Divide the fresh berries between four serving dishes. Top each dish with the chocolate mousse and serve.

## Recipe Notes

- To melt the chocolate in the microwave, place the chocolate chips in a microwave-safe dish and microwave on High power (default setting) for 15-30 seconds at a time, stirring before starting again, until fully melted.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 230 | Total Fat: 10 g | Saturated Fat: 5 g  
Sodium: 45 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 30 g | Dietary Fiber: 1 g | Protein: 5 g**

Adapted from [ChocolateCoveredKate.com](https://chocolatecoveredkate.com) | Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](https://www.nutrition.va.gov)



# Creamy Vanilla Custard

Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 15 minutes | Total: 20 minutes

Yield: 4 servings | Serving Size: ½ cup

## Ingredients

1⅔ cups whole or 2% (reduced fat) milk  
5½ tablespoons sugar, divided  
4 egg yolks  
3 tablespoons cornstarch  
1 tablespoon butter  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

## Directions

1. Add the milk and 4 tablespoons of the sugar to a saucepan and set over medium-low heat. Heat until gently steaming.
2. While the milk mixture heats, in a small to medium mixing bowl, whisk together the egg yolks with the cornstarch and the remaining 1½ tablespoons sugar.
3. Add the egg yolk mixture to the warm milk mixture.
4. Whisk constantly until the mixture thickens enough to coat the back of a spoon, about 3-5 minutes. This will happen around 185°F if checking with a thermometer.
5. Remove the saucepan from the heat and add the butter.
6. Let sit to cool slightly for 5 minutes.
7. Stir in the vanilla.
8. Serve warm, or chill in the refrigerator until ready to serve.
9. To store, transfer the custard to a clean bowl and place plastic wrap over the surface of the custard to keep a skin from forming. This custard will keep in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

## Recipe Notes

- This recipe can be made with a non-dairy milk alternative (e.g. soy milk, almond milk, oat milk) if desired.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving:** Calories: 220 | Total Fat: 9 g | Saturated Fat: 4.5 g  
Sodium: 80 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 28 g | Dietary Fiber: 0 g | Protein: 6 g

Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)



# Avocado Chocolate Mousse

Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 5 minutes | Total: 10 minutes

Yield: 4 servings | Serving Size: ½ cup

## Ingredients

- ½ cup dark chocolate or semi-sweet chocolate chips, melted
- 2 ripe avocados, halved, pits and peels removed
- ¼ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
- ¼ cup sugar-based sweetener (e.g. sugar, honey, maple syrup, agave)
- 3 tablespoons milk (dairy or non-dairy)
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- ⅛ teaspoon salt

## Directions

1. Place the chocolate chips in a microwave-safe dish and microwave on High power (default setting) for 15-30 seconds at a time, stirring before starting again, until fully melted.
2. Add the avocado, cocoa powder, sweetener, milk, vanilla, salt, and melted chocolate to a blender or food processor.
3. Blend until completely smooth, about 2-3 minutes. You may need to stop and scrape the sides halfway through, depending on the strength of your blender or food processor.
4. Serve right away, or chill in the refrigerator until ready to serve. This mousse will keep in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

## Recipe Notes

- Consider serving topped with fresh berries, banana slices, and/or whipped cream.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 320 | Total Fat: 20 g | Saturated Fat: 6 g  
Sodium: 100 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 36 g | Dietary Fiber: 8 g | Protein: 5 g

Adapted from [ChocolateCoveredKate.com](https://chocolatecoveredkate.com) | Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)



# Peanut Noodles with Broccoli

Prep: 10 minutes | Cook: 15 minutes | Total: 25 minutes

Yield: 4 servings | Serving Size: 1¼ cups

## Ingredients

8 ounces whole-wheat spaghetti (half of a 12-ounce box)

2 cups broccoli florets

### Sauce

¼ cup peanut butter

3 tablespoons soy sauce

3 tablespoons rice vinegar

1 tablespoon maple syrup

1 tablespoon fresh grated ginger (or ½ tsp ground ginger)

1 clove garlic, minced (about ½-1 teaspoon)

Pinch cayenne or crushed red pepper flakes (optional)

## Directions

1. Fill a large saucepan or stockpot halfway to two-thirds full with water.
2. Bring the water to a boil over high heat.
3. Add the spaghetti to the boiling water and cook according to the package directions. Add the broccoli to the boiling pasta water when there is 3 minutes of cooking time left.
4. Drain the pasta and broccoli into a colander or strainer, then transfer them back into the pot.
5. While the pasta cooks, add the peanut butter, soy sauce, rice vinegar, maple syrup, ginger, garlic, and cayenne or red pepper (if using) to a bowl or a jar with a lid. Whisk or shake together until well combined to make a sauce.
6. Add the sauce to the cooked pasta and broccoli. Toss with tongs or a pasta fork to coat.
7. Serve warm, or chill in the refrigerator until ready to serve.

## Recipe Notes

- Add shredded cooked chicken or baked tofu for a complete meal.
- Use lite (reduced-sodium) soy sauce to lower the sodium content.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 325 | Total Fat: 10 g | Saturated Fat: 1.5 g  
Sodium: 770 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 51 g | Dietary Fiber: 8.5 g | Protein: 14 g**

Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)

# Cheesy Vegetable Frittata

Prep: 10 minutes | Cook: 35 minutes | Total: 45 minutes

Yield: 4 servings | Serving Size: 2 muffin frittatas or ¼<sup>th</sup> of a pie plate frittata

## Ingredients

6 eggs  
2 tablespoons milk (dairy or non-dairy)  
¼ teaspoon salt  
½ cup shredded or crumbled cheese (e.g. cheddar, feta, parmesan)  
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil  
2-3 cups trimmed and chopped vegetables (one type or a combination; e.g. tomatoes, bell peppers, broccoli, spinach, mushrooms, onions)  
Nonstick cooking spray  
¼ cup chopped fresh basil, divided

## Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Add the eggs, milk, and salt to a medium mixing bowl. Whisk just until the egg yolks and whites are blended.
3. Stir in the cheese, then set the mixture aside.
4. Heat a large skillet or sauté pan over medium heat.
5. Add the oil and heat until shimmering.
6. Add the vegetables, except any leafy greens (e.g. spinach; if using). Cook until tender, then add any leafy greens (if using) and cook until wilted.
7. Remove the pan with the cooked vegetables from the heat and let sit to cool for a few minutes.
8. Stir the cooked vegetables into the egg mixture.
9. Spray the inside of a pie plate or muffin tin cups with cooking spray.
10. Pour the egg mixture into the pie plate or divide over the muffin tin cups.
11. Bake until the eggs are puffed and appear cooked, and the center is no longer runny. This will be about 20-25 minutes if cooking in a pie plate, or about 13-17 minutes if cooking in a muffin tin.
12. Place the pie plate or muffin tin on a cooling rack to cool.
13. Serve warm, sprinkling with the chopped basil as desired.

## Recipe Notes

- For a richer texture, substitute half-and-half for the milk or replace 1 tablespoon of milk with 1 tablespoon of heavy cream.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 220 | Total Fat: 16 g | Saturated Fat: 5.5 g  
Sodium: 330 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 4 g | Dietary Fiber: 1 g | Protein: 13 g

Adapted from [CookieAndKate.com](http://CookieAndKate.com) | Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)

# Hearty Zuppa Toscana

Prep: 15 minutes | Cook: 45 minutes | Total: 60 minutes

Yield: 4 servings | Serving Size: 2 cups

## Ingredients

1 pound turkey or chicken Italian sausage, chopped or sliced if in casings or crumbled if loose

1 large onion, diced (about 1½-2 cups)

2 garlic cloves, minced (about 1-2 teaspoons)

½ teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon black pepper

½ teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes (optional)

2 large russet potatoes, halved and then cut into ¼-inch slices

4 cups (32 ounces) reduced-sodium vegetable or chicken broth

2 cups plus 2 teaspoons water, divided

2 teaspoons flour or cornstarch

2 tablespoons water

2 cups chopped fresh or frozen kale

1 cup half-and-half or whole milk

## Directions

1. Heat a large stockpot or Dutch oven over medium-high heat.
2. Add the sausage and cook until browned, about 5-7 minutes.
3. Add the onion, garlic, salt, pepper, and red pepper flakes (if using). Cook until the onion is softened and translucent, about 3-5 minutes.
4. Add the potatoes, broth, and 2 cups of the water. Stir to combine.
5. Bring the liquid to a simmer over high heat, then reduce the heat to medium.
6. Cook uncovered, stirring occasionally, until the potatoes are tender, about 15-20 minutes. Leave the pot on the heat.
7. In a small bowl, use a fork to whisk together the flour or cornstarch with the remaining 2 teaspoons water. This mixture is called a slurry.
8. Add the slurry mixture to the soup and continue cooking for 15 minutes. Again, leave the pot on the heat.
9. Reduce the heat to low and add the kale. Cook until the kale is wilted and slightly tender, about 5-7 minutes.
10. Turn off the heat and slowly stir in the half-and-half or milk.
11. Serve warm.

## Recipe Notes

- Try substituting bone broth for the vegetable or chicken broth. Bone broth provides additional nutrients and protein.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 360 | Total Fat: 12 g | Saturated Fat: 6.5 g  
Sodium: 890 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 43 g | Dietary Fiber: 6 g | Protein: 23 g

Adapted from Food.com | Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)

# Recipes to Help with Constipation



# Tips for Managing Constipation

Are you having bowel movements that come less often than normal for you, are painful, or are hard to pass? Constipation can be caused by a physical blockage or pressure of your bowel, medications, not eating enough fiber, not drinking enough fluids, inactivity, or a combination of these. Here are some tips to help reduce constipation:

## Drink Plenty of Fluids\*

\*Unless you are told not to by a healthcare provider.

Most people need to drink at least 8 cups (64 ounces) of liquid every day. The color of your urine is typically light yellow to clear when you are well-hydrated. Water is a good liquid choice, but not the only one. Other options include fruit and vegetable juices, such as prune juice. Warm liquids such as coffee or tea may also help.

## Eat Fiber-Rich Foods

- Whole-grain breads and cereals, bran muffins or bran cereals, brown rice or wild rice, cooked or canned legumes (e.g. peas, lentils, pinto beans, black beans), whole wheat bread, whole wheat pasta, and whole-wheat tortillas.
- Fresh or frozen fruit such as apples, blueberries, bananas, and grapes. Dried fruit such as apricots, dates, prunes, and raisins. Raw or cooked vegetables such as carrots, broccoli, beets, green beans, and spinach.
- Nuts, seeds, granola, popcorn, and whole-grain crackers

## Try to Be Active Everyday

Consider low-impact exercises (e.g. walking, riding an exercise bike, swimming) for 15-30 minutes a day. Talk with your doctor or physical therapist to learn about other exercises that can help you.

## Talk to Your Healthcare Team

Ask your healthcare provider about medications that may be helpful in managing constipation. Be sure you understand how much medication to take, how often to take it, and how to adjust it when needed.

Keep a journal of how often you are moving your bowels, what is the stool like (hard, medium, soft), what bowel medication you are taking, and how much bowel medication you are taking daily. This will help your provider adjust your medications if needed. **Call your healthcare team** if you haven't moved your bowels in 2 days.



# One-Pot Curried Lentil Soup

Prep: 15 minutes | Cook: 25 minutes | Total: 40 minutes

Yield: 6 servings | Serving Size: 1½ cups

## Ingredients

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil or canola oil  
½ small onion, diced (about ½ cup)  
4 medium carrots, thinly sliced (about 2 cups)  
1 teaspoon salt  
3 cloves garlic, minced (about 1½-3 teaspoons)  
1 tablespoon ginger, minced or grated (or  
¼ teaspoon ground ginger)  
1 tablespoon curry powder  
Pinch cayenne (optional)  
3 cups vegetable broth  
1 cup coconut milk  
1 cup uncooked red or golden lentils, rinsed and  
picked through to remove any stones  
1 tablespoon soy sauce

## Directions

1. Heat a large saucepan or other large pot over medium heat.
2. Add the oil and heat until shimmering.
3. Add the onion, carrots, and salt. Cook, stirring often, for 3-5 minutes.
4. Add garlic, ginger, curry powder, and cayenne (if using). Cook, stirring often, until fragrant, about 2-3 minutes.
5. Add the broth and coconut milk.
6. Bring to a low boil over high heat, then reduce the heat to a simmer.
7. Add the lentils and soy sauce. Stir to combine.
8. Cook uncovered, stirring occasionally, until the lentils are tender, about 15-20 minutes.
9. Serve warm.

## Recipe Notes

- This soup tastes even better the next day.
- Stir in 1-2 cups of fresh baby spinach at the end of cooking to add color and texture variety.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 210 | Total Fat: 6 g | Saturated Fat: 5 g  
Sodium: 900 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 27 g | Dietary Fiber: 5 g | Protein: 12 g**

Adapted from [minimalistbaker.com](http://minimalistbaker.com) | Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)



# Fig Bran Muffins

Prep: 15 minutes | Cook: 25 minutes | Total: 40 minutes

Yield: 12 servings | Serving Size: 1 muffin

## Ingredients

1½ cups bran cereal  
1 cup milk (dairy or non-dairy)  
¾ cup unsweetened applesauce  
½ cup sugar-based sweetener (e.g. sugar, honey, maple syrup, agave)  
⅓ cup extra-virgin olive oil or canola oil  
2 tablespoons molasses  
1 large egg, beaten  
1½ cups white whole-wheat flour  
1 tablespoon baking powder  
½ teaspoon salt  
½ teaspoon cinnamon  
1 cup chopped dried figs  
Nonstick cooking spray

## Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
2. Add the bran cereal and milk to a large mixing bowl. Let sit until softened, about 5 minutes.
3. Add the applesauce, sweetener, oil, molasses, and egg. Stir until combined.
4. In a separate medium mixing bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, salt, and cinnamon.
5. Add the flour mixture to the cereal-milk mixture and stir until just combined.
6. Gently stir in the chopped figs.
7. Spray the inside of a 12-cup muffin pan with cooking spray.
8. Spoon the batter into the prepared muffin pan.
9. Bake until muffins bounce back when pressed on, about 18-22 minutes.
10. Let the muffins cool in the pan for 15 minutes, then use a butter knife to loosen the muffins from the pan and serve.

## Recipe Notes

- Try substituting pitted dates for the dried figs.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 230 | Total Fat: 8 g | Saturated Fat: 1 g  
Sodium: 170 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 42 g | Dietary Fiber: 6 g | Protein: 5 g**

Adapted from Ellie Krieger, RD | Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD. CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)

# Creamy Broccoli Soup

Prep: 15 minutes | Cook: 25 minutes | Total: 40 minutes

Yield: 6 servings | Serving Size: 2 cups

## Ingredients

3 tablespoons butter  
2 medium leeks, white and light-green parts only, sliced  
2 stalks celery, thinly sliced (about ½ cup)  
8 cups broccoli florets (about 1¼ pounds)  
2 cloves garlic, minced (about 1-2 teaspoons)  
4 cups (32 ounces) reduced-sodium vegetable or chicken broth  
1 teaspoon whole fresh thyme leaves (or ¼ teaspoon dried thyme)  
½ teaspoon salt  
1 cup half-and-half or milk

## Directions

1. Melt butter in a large saucepan or other large pot over medium-high heat.
2. Add the leeks and celery. Cook, stirring occasionally, until softened, about 6-8 minutes.
3. Add the broccoli and garlic. Cook, stirring constantly, until fragrant, about 30-60 seconds.
4. Add the broth and bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce the heat to medium.
5. Cover the pot with a lid and cook until the broccoli is tender, about 10-15 minutes.
6. Add the thyme and salt.
7. Puree the soup with an immersion (handheld) blender until smooth, about 2-5 minutes.
8. Add half-and-half or milk and process just until incorporated, about 15 seconds.
9. Serve warm.

## Recipe Notes

- This soup will keep in the refrigerator for 3-4 days.
- Try substituting bone broth for the vegetable or chicken broth. Bone broth provides additional nutrients and protein.
- If you don't have an immersion blender, complete Steps 7-8 using a standing blender. Transfer the soup to the blender, filling it no more than halfway. Remove the center piece of blender lid to allow steam to escape, then secure the lid on the blender. Place a clean kitchen towel over the opening in the lid and blend until smooth, about 2 minutes. Transfer the pureed soup to a large bowl and repeat the process with any remaining soup.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 160 | Total Fat: 10 g | Saturated Fat: 6 g  
Sodium: 800 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 13 g | Dietary Fiber: 3.5 g | Protein: 5 g**

Adapted from Eatingwell.com | Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)

# Apple-Pear Sauce

**Prep: 10 minutes | Cook: 30 minutes | Total: 40 minutes**

**Yield: 8 servings | Serving Size: ½ cup**

## Ingredients

- 5 medium sweet apples (e.g. Gala, Macintosh, Fuji), peeled, cored and sliced (about 1½ pounds)
- 4 medium ripe pears, peeled, cored and sliced (about 2 pounds)
- ½ cup water
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground ginger
- 1-3 tablespoons maple syrup or honey, to taste (optional)

## Directions

1. In a large saucepan or other large pot, add the apples, pears, water, lemon juice, cinnamon, and ginger.
2. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce the heat to medium-low to maintain a simmer.
3. Cook until the apples and pears are very soft, about 25-30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
4. Remove the pot from the heat.
5. Use an immersion (handheld) blender to blend the mixture into a smooth sauce, or use a potato masher for a chunkier sauce.
6. Taste and add maple syrup or honey if more sweetness is desired.
7. Serve warm, or chill in the refrigerator before serving if desired. This sauce will keep in the refrigerator for 5-7 days, or in the freezer for up to 3 months.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 125 | Total Fat: 1 g | Saturated Fat: 0 g  
Sodium: 30 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 31 g | Dietary Fiber: 5.5 g | Protein: 1 g**

**Adapted from TwoPeasAndTheirPod.com | Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO**

**For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)**

# Recipes to Help with Diarrhea



## Tips for Managing Diarrhea

Diarrhea is a common symptom in people receiving cancer treatment. It occurs when foods and liquids in the intestines are not absorbed well by the body. This results in loose watery stools, often with stomach cramps. Diarrhea can lead to dehydration and weight loss, and can also cause a break in your treatment.

Here are some tips to help reduce diarrhea and its side effects:

### Adjust Eating When You are Having Diarrhea

- Aim to eat 5 or 6 small meals each day, instead of 2 or 3 large meals.
- **Try eating these foods:** White rice, plain white bread or toast, crackers, oatmeal, grits, applesauce, bananas, potatoes without skin, eggs cooked with little fat, peanut butter, lean meats, and lowfat yogurt or cheese if tolerated (some people experience temporary lactose-intolerance)
- **Limit these foods:** Whole grains (e.g. whole-wheat bread, brown rice), raw vegetables, dried fruit, nuts and seeds, fried or greasy foods, spicy foods, sugar-sweetened beverages, desserts, juice, milk, sugar substitutes, sugar-free products containing sorbitol, alcohol, and caffeine

### Replace Lost Fluids

One of the most common complications of diarrhea is dehydration. To replace the fluid lost in diarrhea:

- Drink plenty of fluids throughout the day. Most people need at least 8 cups (64 ounces) per day, plus any fluids that you are losing. The color of your urine is typically light yellow to clear when you are well-hydrated. For a personalized fluid goal, talk to your dietitian.
- Choose non-caffeinated fluids such as water, broth, gelatin desserts, fruit or vegetable juice, popsicles, soups, and herbal tea. Avoid caffeine (e.g. coffee, tea, soda, energy drinks) as this can increase water loss through urine.
- Sip fluids slowly throughout the day, and try not to drink too much too quickly. Drinking liquids at room temperature fluids can also be helpful.
- Limit or avoid beverages containing large amounts of added sugar or high-fructose corn syrup (e.g. soda, some fruit juices, energy drinks).
- If you have severe diarrhea (>4 liquid stools per day) drinking an electrolyte-containing beverage may be needed.



# Simple Bread Pudding

Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 45 minutes | Inactive: 10 minutes | Total: 60 minutes

Yield: 6 servings | Serving Size: 1 cup

## Ingredients

2 cups reduced-fat (2%) milk  
2 tablespoons butter  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
⅓ cup sugar-based sweetener (e.g. sugar, honey, maple syrup)  
Pinch salt  
Nonstick cooking spray  
½ loaf challah bread, cut into 2-inch cubes (about 5-6 cups)  
2 eggs, beaten

## Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Add the milk, butter, vanilla, sweetener, and salt to a small saucepan and place over low. Once the butter has melted, remove the pot from the heat and set aside to cool.
3. Spray an 8-by-8-inch baking dish with cooking spray.
4. Add the bread cubes to the prepared baking dish.
5. Add the eggs to the cooled milk mixture and whisk to combine.
6. Pour the milk-egg mixture over the bread cubes in the baking dish.
7. Bake until the center is no longer liquid, about 35-45 minutes.
8. Let the bread pudding sit in the pan to cool slightly, about 5-10 minutes, then serve warm.

## Recipe Notes

- This bread pudding will stay fresh in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 315 | Total Fat: 11 g | Saturated Fat: 4.5 g  
Sodium: 370 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 44 g | Dietary Fiber: 1 g | Protein: 11 g**

Adapted from [Cooking.NYTimes.com](https://cooking.nytimes.com) | Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO  
For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](https://www.nutrition.va.gov)

# Ginger-Rice Soup

Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 60 minutes | Total: 65 minutes

Yield: 4 servings | Serving Size: 1½ cups

## Ingredients

1 cup uncooked long-grain white rice

7 cups chicken or vegetable broth

1-inch piece fresh ginger, peeled and sliced thin

Optional garnishes: Sliced scallions (green onions), toasted sesame oil, soy sauce

## Directions

1. In a large saucepan or other large pot, add the rice, broth, and ginger.
2. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce the heat to a simmer.
3. Cook until the soup thickens, about 1 hour, stirring occasionally to keep the rice from sticking to the bottom of the pan.
4. Serve warm, topping with scallions, sesame oil, or soy sauce as desired.

## Recipe Notes

- Add a protein food (e.g. cooked chicken, baked tofu) and a cooked vegetable (e.g. carrots, bell peppers) to make this a meal.
- Try substituting bone broth for the chicken or vegetable broth. Bone broth provides additional nutrients and protein.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving:** Calories: 200 | Total Fat: 1 g | Saturated Fat: 0 g  
Sodium: 1100 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 40 g | Dietary Fiber: 0 g | Protein: 5 g

Adapted from [www.foodandwine.com](http://www.foodandwine.com) | Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)

# Homemade Hydration Drink

Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 0 minutes | Total: 5 minutes

Yield: 6 servings | Serving Size: 1 cup

## Ingredients

3 cups (24 ounces) drinking-quality water

2 cups (16 ounces) coconut water

1 cup (8 ounces) pineapple juice

2 tablespoons lemon juice

½ teaspoon salt

## Directions

1. Add the water, coconut water, pineapple juice, lemon juice, and salt to a large pitcher or other storage container(s) for liquids.
2. Mix well to combine.
3. Serve right away, or chill before serving if desired. This homemade hydration drink will keep in the refrigerator for up to 1 week.

## Recipe Notes

- If you prefer more sweetness, increase the amount of pineapple juice or add 1 tablespoon of maple syrup or agave.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 40 | Total Fat: 0 g | Saturated Fat: 0 g  
Sodium: 280 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 9 g | Dietary Fiber: 0 g | Protein: 1 g

Adapted from CookForYourLife.org | Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)

# Avocado Deviled Eggs

Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 0 minutes | Total: 5 minutes

Yield: 2 servings | Serving Size: 2 egg halves

## Ingredients

2 hardboiled eggs, peeled

¼ ripe avocado

Seasoning ideas: salt, ground black pepper, dry mustard, paprika (smoked or regular), cayenne, chives, parsley

## Directions

1. Slice the peeled hardboiled eggs in half.
2. Put the yolks in a small bowl and add the avocado.
3. Mash the yolk and avocado together with a fork. The consistency will depend on how ripe your avocado is. If the mixture seems to dry, add a teaspoon of mayonnaise or plain yogurt.
4. Add a pinch to ¼ teaspoon of any desired seasoning(s), to taste.
5. Fill each egg white half with a quarter of the yolk-avocado mixture.

## Recipe Notes

- To hard-boil eggs, place the eggs in a medium to large saucepan and cover with water by 1 inch. Bring the water to a boil, then turn off the heat and cover the pot with a lid. Let sit for 12 minutes. Put the eggs in a bowl of ice water to cool. Once cooled, peel if using right away or store unpeeled in the refrigerator for up to 7 days.
- Check avocados for ripeness by pressing gently on the skin. The fruit is ripe when it is soft enough to push into slightly, but not mushy. If the avocado is very soft, it is too ripe and will not be as good. A hard avocado will ripen on the counter, faster in a paper bag if needed.
- If you do not have avocado, 1 tablespoon mayonnaise can be used.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving:** Calories: 115 | Total Fat: 9 g | Saturated Fat: 2.5 g  
Sodium: 60 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 2.5 g | Dietary Fiber: 1.5 g | Protein: 6 g

Submitted by Emily Richters MS, RDN, LDN

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)



# Fresh Banana Pudding

Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 15 minutes | Total: 20 minutes

Yield: 4 servings | Serving Size: ½ cup

## Ingredients

2 ripe bananas (yellow with brown spots),  
peeled

1¼ cups milk (dairy or non-dairy)

1 tablespoon sugar-based sweetener (e.g.  
sugar, honey, maple syrup)

1 tablespoon cornstarch

Pinch salt

2 egg yolks

¼ teaspoon vanilla extract

4 shortbread cookies, divided (optional)

## Directions

1. Mash 1 of the bananas with a fork in a small bowl. Set aside.
2. Slice the remaining 1 banana and set aside.
3. In a medium saucepan, whisk together the milk, sweetener, cornstarch, and salt.
4. Place the saucepan over medium heat.
5. As the milk mixture starts to let off small amounts of steam, whisk in the egg yolks.
6. Bring to a low boil and cook, whisking constantly, until thickened to a pudding, about 10-15 minutes.
7. Remove the pot from the heat. Stir in the mashed banana and vanilla.
8. Divide the pudding between four serving dishes. Top each with a quarter of the sliced banana and 1 shortbread cookie (if using).
9. Serve warm, or chill for at least 1 hour before serving.

## Recipe Notes

- If you plan to chill the pudding before serving, wait to add the sliced banana and cookie until you are ready to serve.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 225 | Total Fat: 9 g | Saturated Fat: 4 g  
Sodium: 120 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 32 g | Dietary Fiber: 2 g | Protein: 5 g**

Adapted from CookForYourLife.org | Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)

# Recipes to Ease Sore Mouth and Throat



# Tips for Managing Mouth and Throat Pain

Some people develop sores in their mouths while going through radiation or chemotherapy. Tender gums or throat pain are also common side effects of these treatments. Here are some tips to help with mouth and throat pain:

## Make Adjustments to the Foods You Eat

- Cook food until it is very tender. Add moisture with gravies, butter, sauces, or yogurt to make food easier to eat.
- Eat and drink foods and beverages at room temperature or cold items as these can be very soothing. Use a straw if needed. Ice chips and popsicles can help numb the mouth.
- Eat softer foods such as pudding, yogurt, soups, mashed potatoes, custard, casseroles, scrambled eggs, ice cream, gelatin desserts, ground or tender meats, or hot cereal such as oatmeal or grits.

## Leverage Beverages

- Drink plenty of fluids each day, letting any carbonated drinks stand after opening to get rid of some bubbles.
- Drink high-calorie and high-protein drinks such as milkshakes, smoothies made with high-calorie and high-protein foods, powdered breakfast drinks mixed with whole milk, or eggnog throughout the day.

## Practice Good Oral Hygiene

Keep your mouth clean. Brush your teeth with a soft toothbrush as tolerated. Swish, gargle, and spit with a mild salt or baking soda and water solution before meals. Avoid alcohol-based mouthwashes.

## Avoid Items that Can Worsen Mouth and Throat Pain

- Very hot foods or beverages
- Acidic items such as vinegar and citrus juices (e.g. orange juice, grapefruit juice, lemon juice, tomato juice)
- Spicy foods
- Hard or very crunchy foods (e.g. dry toast, crackers)
- Carbonated beverages
- Alcohol and tobacco products

# Creamy Potato Soup

Prep: 15 minutes | Cook: 25 minutes | Total: 40 minutes

Yield: 4 servings | Serving Size: 1½ cup

## Ingredients

3 medium russet potatoes, peeled and diced  
(about 3 cups, or 1 pound)

1 small onion, diced (about 1 cup)

2 large carrots, peeled and diced (about 2 cups)

2 stalks celery, diced (about ½ cup)

2 cups (16 ounces) chicken or vegetable broth

2 tablespoons butter

2 tablespoons all-purpose or whole-wheat flour

1½ cups milk (dairy or non-dairy)

¼ cup sour cream

Salt, to taste

Ground black pepper, to taste

## Directions

1. In a large stockpot or Dutch oven, add the potatoes, onion, carrots, celery, and broth.
2. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce the heat to medium-low to maintain a simmer.
3. Cover the pot with a lid and cook for 15 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, in a separate medium saucepan, melt the butter over medium heat.
5. Add the flour and whisk together with the butter to form a paste called a roux.
6. Add the milk gradually, whisking as you pour.
7. Bring the roux-milk mixture to a simmer and cook until thickened, whisking constantly, about 2-3 minutes.
8. Add the thickened roux-milk mixture to the pot with the vegetables. Stir to combine and continue cooking for 3-5 minutes.
9. Add the sour cream and stir to combine.
10. Season with salt and pepper as needed.
11. Serve warm.

## Recipe Notes

- This soup will keep in the refrigerator for 3-4 days.
- If you prefer a smooth consistency, blend the finished soup with an immersion (handheld) blender. If you don't have an immersion blender, a standing blender can be used. Transfer the soup to the blender, filling it no more than halfway. Remove the center piece of blender lid to allow steam to escape, then secure the lid on the blender. Place a clean kitchen towel over the opening in the lid and blend until smooth, about 2 minutes. Transfer the pureed soup to a large bowl and repeat the process with any remaining soup.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 260 | Total Fat: 11 g | Saturated Fat: 7 g  
Sodium: 500 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 32 g | Dietary Fiber: 4 g | Protein: 9 g**

Adapted from [CookingClassy.com](https://www.cookingclassy.com) | Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](https://www.nutrition.va.gov)



# Creamy Carrot-Sweet Potato Soup

Prep: 15 minutes | Cook: 25 minutes | Total: 40 minutes

Yield: 4 servings | Serving Size: 1½ cups

## Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon butter or extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 medium onion or 1 leek, diced (about 1 cup)
- 2 cloves garlic, minced (about 1-2 teaspoons)
- 1-inch piece fresh ginger, minced or grated
- 4 large carrots, peeled and diced (about 4 cups)
- 1 medium sweet potato, peeled and diced (about 1 cup)
- 4 cups (32 ounces) reduced-sodium vegetable broth
- 1 cup whole milk or half-and-half
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper (optional)

## Recipe Notes

- Try this soup topped with plain Greek yogurt.
- If you don't have an immersion blender, complete Steps 7-8 using a standing blender. Transfer the soup to the blender, filling it no more than halfway. Remove the center piece of blender lid to allow steam to escape, then secure the lid on the blender. Place a clean kitchen towel over the opening in the lid and blend until smooth, about 2 minutes. Transfer the pureed soup to a large bowl and repeat the process with any remaining soup.

## Directions

1. Heat a large stockpot or Dutch oven over medium heat.
2. Add the butter or oil and heat until the butter is melted or the oil is shimmering.
3. Add the onion, garlic, and ginger. Cook for 3 minutes, stirring often.
4. Add carrots, sweet potato, and broth.
5. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce to a simmer.
6. Cover the pot with a lid and cook until the carrots and sweet potatoes are very soft.
7. Puree the soup with an immersion (handheld) blender until smooth, about 2-5 minutes.
8. Add milk, salt, and black pepper (if using).
9. Serve warm.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 135 | Total Fat: 5 g | Saturated Fat: 1 g  
Sodium: 800 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 21 g | Dietary Fiber: 3.5 g | Protein: 5 g**

Adapted from RecipeTinEats.com | Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)

# Chocolate-Peanut Butter Chia Pudding

Prep: 5 minutes | Chill: 2 hours | Total: 2 hours 5 minutes

Yield: 3 servings | Serving Size: ⅓ cup

## Ingredients

- 1 cup milk (dairy or non-dairy)
- ¼ cup chia seeds
- 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- 2 tablespoons peanut butter
- 2 tablespoons sugar-based sweetener (e.g. sugar, honey, maple syrup)
- Pinch salt

## Directions

1. Add the milk, chia seeds, cocoa powder, peanut butter, sweetener, and salt to a mixing bowl, blender, or food processor.
2. Stir until well combined with a spoon in the mixing bowl or blend until smooth in the blender or food processor, about 2-3 minutes. Note that the mixture will be quite thin at this point.
3. If you used a blender or food processor, pour the mixture into a small bowl.
4. Cover the bowl with a lid or plastic wrap and place in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours. The mixture will thicken as it chills. This chia pudding will keep in the refrigerator for up to 5 days.
5. Stir together to recombine, then serve cold.

## Recipe Notes

- Try serving this chia pudding with fresh berries or sliced bananas.
- Chia pudding has a texture similar to tapioca pudding.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 190 | Total Fat: 10 g | Saturated Fat: 2.5 g  
Sodium: 140 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 20 g | Dietary Fiber: 5 g | Protein: 7 g**

Adapted from [LemonAndZest.com](http://LemonAndZest.com) | Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)



# Throat-Soothing Milkshake

**Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 0 minutes | Total: 5 minutes**

**Yield: 1 serving | Serving Size: 1½ cups**

## Ingredients

- 1 frozen banana, peeled and sliced before freezing
- ¼ cup vanilla ice cream
- 1 cup milk (dairy or non-dairy)
- 2-3 ice cubes
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ⅛-¼ teaspoon ground turmeric, to taste

## Directions

1. Add the milk, banana, ice cream, ice cubes, cinnamon, and turmeric to a blender or food processor.
2. Blend until smooth, about 2-3 minutes. You may need to stop and scrape the sides halfway through, depending on the strength of your blender or food processor.
3. Serve immediately.

## Recipe Notes

- For a chocolate flavor, use chocolate ice cream instead of vanilla ice cream or add 2-3 teaspoons unsweetened cocoa powder
- If you need extra calories, use whole milk or a high-fat non-dairy milk (e.g. full-fat coconut milk).
- If the milkshake is too thick, add 1-3 tablespoons of water or milk and continue blending.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 40 | Total Fat: 0 g | Saturated Fat: 0 g  
Sodium: 280 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 9 g | Dietary Fiber: 0 g | Protein: 1 g**

**Adapted from [www.cookforyourlife.org](http://www.cookforyourlife.org) | Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO**

**For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)**

# Soothing Spice-Infused Milk

Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 5 minutes | Total: 10 minutes

Yield: 1 serving | Serving Size: 1 cup

## Ingredients

- 1 cup milk (dairy or non-dairy)
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ⅛-¼ teaspoon ground ginger, to taste
- ⅛-¼ teaspoon ground turmeric, to taste
- 2 teaspoons sugar-based sweetener (e.g. sugar, honey, maple syrup)

## Directions

1. In a microwave-safe mug or a small saucepan, add the milk, cinnamon, ginger, turmeric, and sweetener.
2. Microwave in the mug on High power (default setting) or heat in the saucepan on the stovetop over medium-high heat until warmed to your liking, about 1-2 minutes in the microwave or 3-5 minutes on the stovetop.
3. Stir with a spoon or a whisk.
4. Serve warm and sip slowly, or chill in the refrigerator and serve cold if this feels better on your throat.

## Recipe Notes

- If you need extra calories, use whole milk or a high-fat non-dairy milk (e.g. full-fat coconut milk).

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 170 | Total Fat: 5 g | Saturated Fat: 3 g  
Sodium: 120 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 24 g | Dietary Fiber: 0.5 g | Protein: 8 g**

Adapted from LifeCurrentsBlog.com | Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)



# Maple-Peanut Butter Oatmeal

**Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 5 minutes | Total: 10 minutes**

**Yield: 1 serving | Serving Size: 1 cup**

## Ingredients

- ½ cup old fashioned (rolled) oats
- ½ cup water
- ½ cup milk (dairy or non-dairy)
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- 1 tablespoon peanut butter
- 2 pitted dates, chopped

## Directions

1. Add the oats, water, milk, maple syrup, peanut butter, and dates to a small saucepan.
2. Place the saucepan over medium-high heat and bring to a simmer, then reduce heat to medium.
3. Cook, stirring often, until the oats are creamy and tender, about 5 minutes.
4. Remove from heat and let sit to cool slightly, about 2-3 minutes, then serve warm.

## Recipe Notes

- Another nut or seed butter (e.g. peanut butter, sunflower butter, almond butter, cashew butter) can be substituted for the peanut butter.
- Try this oatmeal topped with sliced bananas and plain Greek yogurt
- Serve with additional milk as desired.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 400 | Total Fat: 13 g | Saturated Fat: 3.5 g  
Sodium: 140 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 63 g | Dietary Fiber: 6.5 g | Protein: 13 g**

**Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO**

**For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)**

# Stovetop Chicken Broth

Prep: 25 minutes | Cook: 1 hour | Total: 1 hour 25 minutes

Yield: 8 servings | Serving Size: 1 cup

## Ingredients

3 pounds raw bone-in chicken thighs,  
drumsticks, backs, and/or wings  
1 tablespoon canola oil or avocado oil  
1 medium or large onion, roughly chopped  
8 cups drinking-quality water  
2 bay leaves

## Directions

1. (Optional) Hack the chicken into 2-inch pieces using a meat cleaver. This will expose the bone marrow for a more flavorful stock in less time.
2. Heat a large stockpot or Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add the oil and heat until shimmering.
3. Add half of the chicken pieces and cook until lightly browned on both sides, about 5 minutes. Transfer the browned chicken pieces to a large bowl. Repeat with the second half of the chicken pieces.
4. Add the onion to the fat left in the pot and cook until softened, about 3-5 minutes.
5. Return the browned chicken pieces and any accumulated juices to the pot.
6. Cover the pot with a lid and reduce the heat to low. Cook, stirring occasionally, until the chicken has released its juices, about 20 minutes.
7. Add the water and bay leaves.
8. Bring the water to a boil, then reduce the heat to a gentle simmer.
9. Cover with a lid and cook, skimming as needed, until the broth tastes rich and flavorful, about 20-30 minutes.
10. Strain the broth through a fine-mesh strainer.
11. Let the broth settle for 5-10 minutes, then remove any fat on the surface using a wide shallow spoon or fat separator.
12. Refrigerate for up to 4 days or freeze up to 6 months.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 30 | Total Fat: 0.5 g | Saturated Fat: 0.5 g  
Sodium: 125 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 2 g | Dietary Fiber: 0 g | Protein: 4 g**

Adapted from America's Test Kitchen | Submitted by Dana Herring MS, RDN

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)

# Slow Cooker Bone Broth

Prep: 15 minutes | Cook: 24 hours | Total: 24 hours 15 minutes

Yield: 16 servings | Serving Size: ~1 cup

## Ingredients

3-4 pounds roasted beef bones (e.g. oxtail, marrow, knuckles, short rib) or roasted chicken bones (from about 12-14 pounds whole chicken, or 3-5 rotisserie chickens)

2 medium carrots, roughly chopped (about 1 cup)

3 stalks celery, roughly chopped (about 1 cup)

2 medium onion, roughly chopped (about 3-4 cups)

2 bay leaves

2 tablespoons vinegar (e.g. white vinegar, apple cider vinegar, rice vinegar, red wine vinegar)

1 tablespoon black peppercorns or ground black pepper

8-12 cups cold or room temperature drinking-quality water

## Directions

1. Place the bones, carrots, celery, onion, bay leaves, vinegar and peppercorns into the pot of a 6-quart slow cooker.
2. Add water to completely cover the other ingredients.
3. Cover the slow cooker with a lid.
4. Set the slow cooker to cook on low for the longest amount of time it will allow, for a total cook time of 24 hours. Throughout cooking, add more water as needed to keep all the ingredients covered in water and skim the foam off the top with a large spoon as you notice it.
5. Discard all solids and carefully pour the broth through a fine-mesh strainer lined with cheesecloth into a large bowl.
6. Ladle the bone broth into storage containers and let it cool to room temperature.
7. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 6 days or in the freezer for up to 6 months. Before using, skim off any fat on the surface.

## Recipe Notes

- Keep the bones in a plastic ziptop bag in the freezer until you are ready to make broth.
- This may take 2-3 cooking cycles. Set a timer to remind yourself when you need to set the next cooking cycle.
- Beef bones may be available in the meat section or from the butcher counter at your local grocery store. If you cannot find them there, look at a butcher shop.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving:** Calories: 45 | Total Fat: 0.5 g | Saturated Fat: 0.5 g  
Sodium: 90 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 0 g | Dietary Fiber: 0 g | Protein: 10 g

Adapted from [StreetSmartKitchen.com](http://StreetSmartKitchen.com) | Submitted by Dana Herring MS, RDN  
For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)

# Pressure Cooker Bone Broth

Prep: 15 minutes | Cook: 1 hour 20 minutes | Total: 1 hour 35 minutes

Yield: 16 servings | Serving Size: ~1 cup

## Ingredients

2-2½ pounds roasted beef bones (e.g. oxtail, marrow, knuckles, short rib) or roasted chicken bones (from about 6-7 pounds whole chicken, or 2-3 rotisserie chickens)

6 medium carrots, roughly chopped (about 3 cups)

6 stalks celery, roughly chopped (about 2 cups)

1 medium onion, roughly chopped (about 1½-2 cups)

4 cloves garlic, smashed

6 sprigs fresh rosemary (or 2 teaspoons dried rosemary)

6 sprigs fresh thyme (or ½ teaspoon dried thyme)

1 tablespoon black peppercorns or ground black pepper

2 tablespoons vinegar (e.g. white vinegar, apple cider vinegar, rice vinegar, red wine vinegar)

12 cups cold or room temperature drinking-quality water

## Directions

1. To a 6-quart pressure cooker pot, add the beef or chicken bones, carrots, celery, onion, garlic, rosemary, thyme, peppercorns, vinegar, and water. Stir to combine.
2. Place a stovetop pressure cooker over medium-high heat or set an electric pressure cooker to high heat sauté. Bring to a boil.
3. Cook until any foam with debris comes to the surface, then carefully skim this off the top with a large spoon.
4. Lock the lid onto the pressure cooker and turn the pressure valve to seal.
5. Lock the lid in place and close the pressure valve. For a stovetop cooker, bring to pressure over high heat and then reduce to low heat. Set an electric pressure cooker to high pressure. Cook for 60 minutes, with the time starting after the pressure has built up.
6. Turn off the heat and turn the pressure valve to vent to release the pressure. Once the pressure is completely released, carefully open the lid, allowing the steam to escape away from you.
7. Discard all solids and carefully pour the broth through a fine-mesh strainer lined with cheesecloth into a large bowl.
8. Ladle the bone broth into storage containers and let it cool to room temperature.
9. Store in an airtight container in the refrigerator for up to 6 days or in the freezer for up to 6 months. Before using, skim off any fat on the surface.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 45 | Total Fat: 0.5 g | Saturated Fat: 0.5 g  
Sodium: 90 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 0 g | Dietary Fiber: 0 g | Protein: 6 g**

Adapted from Tasty.com | Submitted by Dana Herring MS, RDN

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)

# Recipes to Ease Nausea



# Tips for Managing Nausea and Vomiting

Nausea (upset stomach) and vomiting (throwing up) are common side effects of cancer treatment. While this may make it difficult to eat, it is important that you eat to maintain strength and good nutrition during your treatment. In fact, nausea may actually get worse if you are not eating. Here are some tips to help you with nausea and vomiting:

## Eat What Sounds Good

- Eat 5 or 6 small meals or snacks, eating every 2-3 hours throughout the day, instead of 2 or 3 large meals. You can try eating more between treatments when your appetite is better.
- Eat simple dry foods (e.g. crackers, dry cereal, toast). Avoid very sweet, spicy, fried, or greasy foods.
- Avoid foods with strong smells and serve foods cold or at room temperature to limit odors. As much as you can, stay out of areas where food is prepared if being around food odors bothers you.

## Make Eating Easier

- Have frozen or prepared meals on hand so you do not have to cook when you feel nauseous.
- Keep small portions of your favorite foods on hand.
- Rinse your mouth before and after meals.
- Ask your dietitian if a nutrition supplement is right for you.

## Get Comfortable

- Chewing gum or candy, especially tart candy, may help with nausea.
- Try to wait at least two hours after eating before lying down.
- Wear loose-fitting clothing.
- Try slow, deep breathing to calm your stomach.

## Stay Hydrated

Staying hydrated is very important, especially if you are vomiting. Try to drink 8 cups of liquid a day, sipping small amounts at a time, plus ½-1 cup for every episode of vomiting to prevent dehydration.



# Making Crackers and Toast Go Further

Crackers and toast are often well tolerated when you have an upset stomach. Here are some topping ideas to boost their nutrition, flavor, and texture:

## Topping Ideas for Crackers

Start with choosing a cracker that you enjoy. Some crackers will hold up better with toppings than others. A crumbly cracker works best with a sticky topping (peanut butter), while a crisp cracker will work with a dry or wet topping.

- Hard cheeses (e.g. cheddar, swiss) or pasteurized soft cheeses (e.g. cottage cheese, cream cheese)
- Nut or seed butter (e.g. peanut butter, almond, butter, cashew butter, sunflower butter)
- Egg salad, tuna salad, or chicken salad
- Salsa (if your stomach feels up to spice)
- Pesto
- Hummus

## Topping Ideas for Toast

Choose a whole-grain bread for added nutrition. If white bread is more appealing, try a white whole-wheat bread. Consider going beyond bread with English muffins, bagels, sandwich thins, wraps, or pita bread.

- Butter with honey or jam
- Nut or seed butter (e.g. peanut butter, almond, butter, cashew butter, sunflower butter) with jam, honey, or sliced banana
- Melted cheese
- Mashed avocado with salt, pepper, and/or lemon juice
- Cream cheese and jam or fresh berries
- Egg salad, tuna salad, or chicken salad
- Hummus and cucumber slices, sprinkled with salt and pepper



# Ginger Tea

Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 15 minutes | Total: 20 minutes

Yield: 2 servings | Serving Size: 1 cup

## Ingredients

3 cups (24 ounces) drinking-quality water

1½-inch piece fresh ginger, peeled and sliced

1-2 teaspoons honey, to taste (optional)

## Directions

1. Add the water and ginger to a small or medium saucepan.
2. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce to a simmer.
3. Cook until the ginger flavor is infused to your liking, about 10-15 minutes.
4. Remove the ginger chunks with a strainer or slotted spoon.
5. Add honey to taste if desired.
6. Sip hot, let cool slightly and sip warm, or chill in the refrigerator or with ice cubes and sip cold.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 40 | Total Fat: 0 g | Saturated Fat: 0 g  
Sodium: 0 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 10 g | Dietary Fiber: 0 g | Protein: 0 g

Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)



# Gingerbread Muffins

Prep: 10 minutes | Cook: 25 minutes | Total: 35 minutes

Yield: 12 servings | Serving Size: 1 muffin

## Ingredients

1 cup milk (dairy or non-dairy)  
1 tablespoon vinegar  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup dark molasses  
 $\frac{1}{3}$  cup canola oil or extra-virgin olive oil  
1 egg  
 $\frac{3}{4}$  cup all-purpose flour  
1 cup whole-wheat flour  
1 $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoons baking soda  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1 teaspoon ground ginger  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon ground cloves  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon ground nutmeg  
Nonstick cooking spray

## Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
2. In a medium mixing bowl, stir together the milk and vinegar. Let sit until the milk is slightly curdled, about 3-5 minutes.
3. Add the molasses, oil, and egg to the milk mixture. Stir to combine.
4. In a separate medium mixing bowl, whisk together the all-purpose flour, whole-wheat flour, baking soda, salt, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, and nutmeg.
5. Add the flour mixture to the milk mixture, gently stirring just until a batter forms and there is no more dry flour.
6. Spray the inside of a 12-cup muffin tins with cooking spray.
7. Fill each muffin cup about two-thirds full with the batter.
8. Bake until muffins bounce back when pressed on, about 22-25 minutes.
9. Let the muffins cool in the pan for 5 minutes, then use a butter knife to loosen the muffins from the pan and serve.

## Recipe Notes

- Enjoy as a snack, or eat with fruit and a cooked egg or Greek yogurt for a complete meal.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 160 | Total Fat: 7 g | Saturated Fat: 1 g  
Sodium: 200 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 22 g | Dietary Fiber: 1 g | Protein: 2 g**

Submitted by Maureen Gallagher, MS, RD

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)



# Gingery Chicken Noodle Soup

Prep: 15 minutes | Cook: 30 minutes | Total: 45 minutes

Yield: 6 servings | Serving Size: 1½ cups

## Ingredients

1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil or canola oil  
1 medium onion, diced (about 1-1½ cups)  
2 stalks celery, diced (about ½ cup)  
2 large carrots, peeled and diced (about 2 cups)  
1-inch piece fresh ginger, minced or grated (or 1 teaspoon ground ginger)  
6 cups (48 ounces) chicken broth  
1 cup shredded or chopped cooked chicken  
2 cups chopped kale  
1 cup dry pasta

## Directions

1. Heat a large stockpot or Dutch oven over medium-high heat.
2. Add the oil and heat until shimmering.
3. Add the onion, celery, carrots, and ginger. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes.
4. Add the chicken broth.
5. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium-low to maintain a simmer.
6. Cook for 10 minutes.
7. Add the cooked chicken and kale. Stir to combine, then continue cooking for 5 minutes.
8. Add the pasta and stir to combine. Continue cooking until the pasta is tender, about 10-12 minutes.
9. Serve warm.

## Recipe Notes

- If you are using raw chicken, cut it into bite-sized chunks and add it with the broth.
- Try substituting chicken bone broth for the regular chicken broth. Bone broth provides additional nutrients and protein.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving:** Calories: 170 | Total Fat: 2.5 g | Saturated Fat: 0 g  
Sodium: 800 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 22 g | Dietary Fiber: 2 g | Protein: 15 g

Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)



# Simple Lemon Noodles

Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 10 minutes | Total: 15 minutes

Yield: 2 servings | Serving Size: 1 cup

## Ingredients

4 ounces dry pasta (about a quarter of a 16-ounce box)  
1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil  
1 tablespoon butter  
1 clove garlic, minced (about ½-1 teaspoon)  
1 lemon, zested and juiced  
¼ cup minced fresh parsley (or 1 tablespoon dried parsley)  
¼ teaspoon salt

## Directions

1. Cook the pasta according to the package directions. When the pasta is done cooking, reserve ¼ cup of the cooking liquid and then drain the rest of the water from the pasta.
2. While the pasta is cooking, heat the oil and butter in a medium skillet over medium heat, until the oil is shimmering and the butter is melted.
3. Add the garlic, lemon zest, and parsley to the skillet. Cook until fragrant, about 1-2 minutes.
4. Add the cooked pasta, the reserved ¼ cup pasta cooking water, lemon juice, and salt. Toss to combine.
5. Serve warm.

## Recipe Notes

- Choose a whole-wheat pasta for more fiber.
- Top with shredded or grated parmesan cheese if desired.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 290 | Total Fat: 14 g | Saturated Fat: 5 g  
Sodium: 350 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 35 g | Dietary Fiber: 1 g | Protein: 7 g

Adapted from FoodNetwork.com | Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)

# Recipes to Help with Difficulty Chewing and Swallowing

A close-up photograph of a white bowl filled with a smooth, orange-colored soup, likely pumpkin or carrot. The soup is garnished with several small, diced pieces of orange fruit, possibly mango or peach. The bowl is set on a white surface, and a slice of tomato is visible in the background. A semi-transparent white banner with a dark blue border at the bottom is overlaid on the image, containing the title text.

# Tips for Safer Chewing and Swallowing

Cancer treatments and some surgeries can make it difficult to safely chew and swallow foods and liquids. If you have difficulty chewing or swallowing, try these tips to make eating and drinking easier and safer:

## Choose Soft Moist Foods

- Scrambled eggs
- Macaroni and cheese, soups, stews, and mashed potatoes with gravy
- Ice cream, custard, puddings, yogurt, cottage cheese, or gelatin desserts
- Canned fruit
- Canned or well-cooked vegetables
- Cooked cereal without lumps (e.g. oatmeal)

## Adjust the Texture of Foods

- Chop, puree or blend foods you have difficulty chewing or swallowing.
- Add gravy, sauces, broth, butter, margarine, mayonnaise or sour cream to soften and moisten foods.
- Soften hard foods such as toast by dunking it into milk, cocoa, coffee or tea.
- Cut food into small bites and eat slowly. Chew well and swallow your food before taking another bite.

## Adapt Your Eating Experience

- Keep mealtime relaxed.
- Sit as upright as possible when you eat and remain that way for at least two hours after the meal.
- Do not talk and eat at the same time.
- Take a small sip of water or another beverage after each bite of food, but do not try to wash down solids with sips of liquids. Be sure to follow any guidelines provided by your speech or swallowing therapist.
- Ask your dietitian if a nutrition supplement is right for you.

# Italian-Style Chicken Puree

Prep: 4 minutes | Cook: 1 minute | Total: 5 minutes

Yield: 1 serving | Serving Size: ⅔ cup

## Ingredients

½ cup chopped or shredded cooked chicken (white meat, dark meat, or a combination)

3 tablespoons tomato sauce

¼ teaspoon Italian seasoning

Pinch salt

Pinch pepper

1 tablespoon grated or shredded parmesan cheese

## Directions

1. Puree the chicken, tomato sauce, Italian seasoning, salt, and pepper together using a food processor or immersion (handheld) blender. Add 1-2 tablespoons water if the mixture is too thick to blend.
2. Transfer the puree to a small microwave-safe bowl and microwave on High power (default setting) until warmed to your liking, about 30-60 seconds.
3. Sprinkle with parmesan cheese and serve warm.

## Recipe Notes

- Canned chicken can be used if you do not have leftover cooked chicken.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving:** Calories: 145 | Total Fat: 4 g | Saturated Fat: 1.5 g  
Sodium: 500 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 3 g | Dietary Fiber: 0.5 g | Protein: 23 g

Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)



# Beef and Root Vegetable Puree

Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 25 minutes | Total: 30 minutes

Yield: 2 servings | Serving Size: 1 cup

## Ingredients

4 ounces stew beef, cut into 1-inch chunks  
1 large carrot, peeled and chopped (about 1 cup)  
½ large sweet potato, peeled and chopped (about 1 cup)  
2 cups beef broth, chicken broth, or vegetable broth  
Water, as needed

## Directions

1. Add the beef, carrot, sweet potato, and broth to a medium saucepan.
2. Bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce the heat to medium-low to maintain a simmer.
3. Cover the saucepan with a lid and cook until the vegetables are tender, about 20-25 minutes. Halfway through the cooking time, check to make sure the vegetables are still covered by broth. If not, add enough water to cover them.
4. Blend until completely smooth with an immersion (handheld) blender or transfer to a standing blender, with the center piece of the lid removed and covered with a hand towel or folded-up paper towel.
5. If the puree is too thick, add an additional 1-3 tablespoons of water or broth and continue blending.
6. Serve warm.

## Recipe Notes

- Season with salt, pepper, or other seasonings if desired.
- This puree can be stored in the refrigerator for 3-4 days
- To reduce the sodium content, use low-sodium or reduced-sodium broth or use water instead.

**Nutrition Facts Per Serving:** Calories: 180 | Total Fat: 5 g | Saturated Fat: 0.5 g  
Sodium: 800 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 14 g | Dietary Fiber: 2.5 g | Protein: 18 g

Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)

# Creamy Peach Smoothie

Prep: 5 minutes | Cook: 0 minutes | Total: 5 minutes

Yield: 2 servings | Serving Size: 1 cup

## Ingredients

- 1 cup milk (dairy or non-dairy)
- 2 cups frozen peach slices
- 1 banana
- ½ cup cottage cheese
- 1 tablespoon honey
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon

## Directions

1. Add the milk, peaches, banana, cottage cheese, honey, and cinnamon to a blender.
2. Blend until smooth, about 2-3 minutes. You may need to stop and scrape the sides halfway through, depending on the strength of your blender.
3. Serve immediately.

## Recipe Notes

- You can use mango or pineapple as an alternative to peaches, or try a combination of two or all three.
- If the smoothie is too thick, add 1-3 tablespoons of water or milk and continue blending.

Nutrition Facts Per Serving: Calories: 250 | Total Fat: 4 g | Saturated Fat: 2.5 g  
Sodium: 280 mg | Total Carbohydrate: 43 g | Dietary Fiber: 3.5 g | Protein: 13.5 g

Adapted from RachelCooks.com | Submitted by Robin LaCroix, RD, CSO

For more recipes, please visit [www.nutrition.va.gov](http://www.nutrition.va.gov)

# Managing Changes to Taste and Smell



# Tips for Managing Altered Taste and Smell

Some cancer treatments can cause changes in your senses of taste, smell, or both. You may notice that foods taste bitter or metallic, overly sweet, too salty, strong, or bland. Food odors may smell stronger and less pleasant. These changes may affect your appetite and desire to eat. Remember that good nutrition is an essential part of treatment. Here are some tips for managing taste and smell changes during your treatment.

## Adjust Foods to Overcome Taste Changes

- Drink fluids with meals and in between meals. Try adding a slice of lemon or a water flavoring packet.
- Eat fruit or sip on fruit juice with your meals to help refresh your taste buds. You could also try a fruit smoothie with ice cream or yogurt.
- Avoid eating your favorite foods during treatment to minimize the chance for developing food aversions.
- Try chewing sugar-free gum or sucking on hard candy, mints, or lemon drops.
- Add spices, herbs, and condiments to enhance the flavor of foods.
- Avoid eating acidic or spicy foods if you have a sore mouth or throat.

## Maintain Good Oral Hygiene

- Keep your mouth clean by brushing and flossing daily. Make sure to brush both your teeth and your tongue.
- Try rinsing with a baking soda-salt mouthwash before meals. Recipe: 1 teaspoon baking soda,  $\frac{3}{4}$  teaspoon salt, and 4 cups water. Directions: Swish, gargle, and spit. Do not swallow the mouthwash.

## Minimize Food Odors

- Serve food cold or at room temperature.
- Avoid cooking with appliances that let off lingering food odors such as microwave, slow cookers, and pressure cookers.
- Avoid eating in the car since the food odors tend to linger, even after the food and packaging is removed.
- Cover beverages with a lid and drink through a straw.

## Taste-Specific Food Adjustments

### If food tastes bitter or metallic:

- Avoid eating and drinking from metal containers. Use non-metallic utensils such as chopsticks and plasticware.
- Cook and reheat food in glass, plastic, silicone, or ceramic cookware.
- Try adding fat to foods (e.g. olive oil, butter, nut butter, avocado).
- Add a sweetener (e.g. maple syrup, honey, agave) or a naturally sweet food to your meal or dish (e.g. fruit, caramelized onion, carrots).
- Red meat can often taste metallic. Try substituting other protein foods such as chicken, turkey, fish, eggs, cheese, peanut butter, beans, lentils, peas, or Greek yogurt. If you do choose to eat red meat, try cooking it or marinating it with something acidic (e.g. sweet and sour sauce, citrus marinade, wine, vinegar).

### If food tastes too sweet:

- Add lemon juice and salt to sweet foods.
- Add a couple drops of lemon or lime juice to your tongue before eating.
- Add umami, or savory, ingredients to meals and dishes (e.g. tomatoes, mushrooms).
- Add acidic ingredients to meals and dishes (e.g. tomatoes, vinegar, citrus fruits and juice, sweet-tart and tart apples, dried cranberries, sauerkraut, plain yogurt, tart grapes, raspberries).

### If food tastes too salty:

- Choose no-salt-added and reduced-sodium products.
- Add a sweetener (e.g. maple syrup, honey, agave), an acidic ingredient (e.g. lemon juice, vinegar), or both.

### If food tastes too strong:

- Eat mild-tasting foods such as crackers, bread, pasta, potatoes, milk, rice, cottage cheese, gelatin desserts, pudding, yogurt, peanut butter, eggs, beans, broth-based soup, avocado, or cooked fruits and vegetables.
- Avoid fried foods, raw fruits and vegetables, whole nuts or seeds, strong-tasting cheeses (e.g. bleu cheese, Swiss, parmesan), herbs, spices, sauerkraut, pickles, and sugary foods.

### If food tastes too bland:

- Add flavor to meals and dishes with ingredients like salt, pepper, herbs, spices, chile peppers, vinegar, lemon juice, sweeteners, and condiments.
- Try adding sour-tasting foods to meals or dishes (e.g. yogurt, fermented or pickled vegetables, sourdough bread, grapefruit, tart cherries).
- Alternate bites of different tasting foods during your meals. Examples include cottage cheese with peaches or pears, grilled cheese with tomato soup, and banana with nut butter.

# A Nourished Life Beyond Cancer



# Nutrition Tips for Cancer Survivors

Lifestyle and nutrition can make a big difference in your cancer risk, even after you've recovered from cancer. There are no foods or dietary supplements that treat or prevent cancer completely. However, there are some things you can do to decrease your risk of cancer returning after treatment. Consider adding one or more of the following practices to your routine to help you live a longer and fuller life.

## Increase Intake of Produce and Whole Grains

Try making whole plant-based foods (e.g. fruits, vegetables, beans, nuts, seeds, whole grains, soy) the majority of your meals, along with smaller portions of meat. Aim to eat 3 cups of vegetables and 2 cups of fruit every day, while including a variety of colors. You don't have to go meat-free to benefit from a plant-based meal pattern. Try having meals that incorporate more vegetables. Some examples include:

- Stir-fried vegetables over brown rice, with tofu or chicken
- Soups that include a lot of vegetables, beans, and/or whole grains, in addition to meat
- Salads topped with tuna, beans, nuts, and/or eggs

## Minimize Intake of Red Meat and Processed Meat

Red, cured, pickled, and smoked meats have been shown to increase risk for certain types of cancer. While it is best to limit these meats as much as possible, you can still have them in moderation if you really enjoy them. When you do eat meat, consider these cooking strategies to decrease your risk:

- Choose leaner cuts of meat like sirloin, loin, or round roast.
- Marinate meat for at least 30 minutes before cooking with dry high-heat cooking methods (e.g. searing, grilling). At least half of the marinade should be an acidic ingredient (e.g. lemon juice, apple cider or balsamic vinegar).
- Avoid flame flare-ups on the grill. Do not press meat as it cooks since fat may drip into the flames underneath and cause more flare-ups. Keep a spray bottle with water near the grill to douse flare-ups when they do happen.
- Do not overcook or burn meat. Use a microwave to partially cook meat prior to grilling, cook at a lower temperature for a longer time, or use a slow cooker.
- Cut meat into smaller pieces before grilling to reduce cooking time. Flip the meat often while it cooks.

## Choose Healthy Sources of Fat

Saturated fats are found mostly in meat and dairy products. Trans fats (partially hydrogenated fat or oil) are found in foods like margarine and some fried foods. Saturated fats and trans fats may increase inflammation in your body. Increased inflammation may increase your cancer risk. Try to reduce the amount of saturated fats you eat, and avoid trans fats. Instead, choose healthy fats like nuts and seeds, avocados, and healthier oils (e.g. olive, canola, avocado).

## Find Ways to Get Active Everyday

Aim to work in up to 150 minutes of moderate exercise or 75 minutes of vigorous exercise every week. In moderate exercise, your heart is beating faster but you should still be able to talk. When doing vigorous exercise, it will be difficult to speak in complete sentences.

All forms of exercise count. Some ideas are parking further from the store, having a dance party with your grandkids, joining a fitness class, gardening, and hiking. Do what feels good to you!

## Limit or Avoid Alcohol

Alcohol, even red wine, increases your risk for certain cancers. You can get the health benefits of red wine from foods, like red grapes or boiled peanuts, without increasing your cancer risk.

If you do decide to drink, limit it to one drink per day for women and up to two drinks per day for men. The equivalent of one alcoholic drink is:

- 12 fluid ounces with 5% alcohol (e.g. beer, beer coolers, malt beverages)
- 5 fluid ounces with 12% alcohol (e.g. wine)
- 1.5 fluid ounces with 40% alcohol, or 80 proof (e.g. distilled spirits)

For more information on the potential risks of alcohol consumption and what counts as a drink, please visit [www.rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov).

## Practice Mindfulness

Mindfulness is simply the practice of being present, while paying attention your surroundings and how you feel without judgement. Mindfulness can help reduce stress and anxiety, improve the quality of your sleep, and improve your overall quality of life.

One way to practice mindfulness is around food. Eat somewhere that is free of distractions. Pay attention to how your body feels while you eat. Notice the texture and taste of food. Pause to feel grateful for the food you are eating and for your body. Listen to the signals your body sends you. Aim to eat nourishing foods when you are hungry and pay attention to when you feel full. Give yourself permission to eat the foods you crave and enjoy them.

## Start Small and Build from There

Long-term health is not an all-or-nothing approach. Start where you are and add something simple. Meet with your oncology dietitian for individualized recommendations and support.

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