



NOURISH Step Food Hacks

Small changes that make everyday foods more nourishing



Greater Wisconsin
Agency on Aging Resources, Inc.

You don't have to give up your favorite foods. Mindful, nourishing eating is about progress—not perfection. Even one small change makes a difference.



Grilled Cheese

- Use whole-grain bread (Increase Fiber)
- Add tomato, spinach, onions, fruit such as apples or peaches (Nutrient Dense)
- Grill with olive oil instead of butter or margarine. (Omega 3 & Healthy Fat)
- Add turkey, tuna, egg (fried or hard-boiled sliced), or beans for protein & high in leucine needed for muscle synthesis. (Increase Protein)

NOURISH Tip: Pair with soup for extra fluids (Hydration)



Pasta

- Choose whole-wheat, bean, or lentil-based pasta (Increase Fiber & Protein)
- Add vegetables and beans or chicken (Nutrient Dense & Increase Protein)
- Mash or puree kidney or navy beans and add to sauce or add Shrimp & ricotta to increase leucine.
- Use olive oil-based sauces (Omega 3's & Healthy Fats)
- Watch added sugar and sodium in jarred sauces (Sugar & Sodium Awareness)

NOURISH Tip: Protein + fiber help prevent energy crashes and keep blood sugar steady



Soup

- Use low-sodium broth and look for low-sodium soups (Sodium Awareness)
- Add beans, lentils, or vegetables (Nutrient Dense)
- Add walnuts, seeds like pepitas (Omega 3s & Healthy Fats and leucine)
- Add feta or other cheese, or make with milk (Increase Protein)

NOURISH Tip: Soup counts toward hydration!



Casseroles or Hot Dish

- Add shredded vegetables or leafy greens (Nutrient Dense)
- Substitute part or all with brown rice, quinoa, or whole grains (Increase Fiber)
- Sprinkle Nutritional Yeast flakes (high in B¹²) on top before baking = toasted & cheesy
- Add beans, tuna, lentils, or lean meat (Increase Protein)

NOURISH Tip: One-pan meals save time and money. [Sheet Pan](#) meals are a great option too!



Oatmeal

- Transition from Quick Cook or Instant to Old Fashioned or Steel Cut Oats (Increase fiber and decrease Sodium & Sugar)
- Add walnuts, flax, or chia seeds (Omega 3's & healthy fats)
- Stir in milk, yogurt, or peanut butter powder, nut butter, or powdered milk or protein powder (Increase Protein)
- Flavor w/fruit or canned pumpkin puree instead of sugar or add sauteed veggies for a savory side (Nutrient Dense). Find more pumpkin recipes at [FoodHero.org](#).

NOURISH Tip: Fiber + protein = longer-lasting energy. Try an [Overnight Oats](#) recipe.



Yogurt

- Choose plain or minimal added sugar. Watch for sugar substitutes. (Sugar Aware)
- Add fruit, nuts, or seeds (Increase Protein and Fiber)
- Choose Greek or Icelandic yogurt (Increase Protein & leucine)
- Use Plain yogurt instead of sour cream (Omega 3s & Healthy Fats)
- Flavor Plain yogurt with extracts and spices.

NOURISH Tip: Good for gut health and to increase protein, fiber, pre and probiotics.



Salad

- Add colorful veggies, fruit, nuts, & seeds
- Include protein (beans, eggs, chicken, tuna)
- Use olive oil-based dressings, lemon or lime juice, or salsa.

NOURISH Tip: Put the greens under your entrée and skip the dressing & the added calories.



Sandwich

- Use whole-grain bread or a large portabella mushroom as a bun!
- Add lots of veggies
- Swap mayo for hummus or avocado (sliced or mashed)
- Choose lower-sodium meats or use less

NOURISH Tip: Try a variety of mustards to elevate the flavor. It's one of the lowest calorie and lowest cholesterol condiment options. It is rich in calcium, potassium, niacin, and magnesium



Pizza

- Choose whole-grain, thin crust, or cauliflower crust when available
- Add extra vegetables, artichokes, fresh greens, and even fruit!
- Use less cheese or choose part-skim cheese
- Try pesto or olive oil-base or drizzle
- Go easy on processed meats to reduce sodium

NOURISH Tip: Pair pizza with a salad or veggies to boost fiber and hydration



Peanut butter & Jelly Sandwich

- Choose lower added sugar brands
- Choose natural version without hydrogenated fat
- Top with mashed fresh fruit or banana slices instead of jelly
- Choose whole grain bread or crackers

NOURISH Tip: Try a fresh twist on PB&J—use natural peanut butter, whole-grain bread, and mashed fruit for sweetness without the added sugar



Baked Goods

- Add oats, nuts, shredded veggies, or fruit (refrigerate after baking)
- Cut sugar by 1/4 to 1/2 for most recipes still taste great
- Enjoy with milk, the protein helps keep blood sugar stable

NOURISH Tip: Treats can still offer nourishment

Comfort Foods Can Still NOURISH

Ice Cream

- Choose smaller portions and enjoy slowly (use a baby spoon to savor each bite)
- Add nuts, seeds, or peanut butter for healthy fats
- Pair with fruit for fiber and nutrients
- Try frozen yogurt bark or lower-sugar slow-churned options.
- “Nice Cream”- blend frozen bananas + splash of milk + cinnamon/cocoa + vanilla

NOURISH Tip: Pairing with protein or fiber helps steady blood sugar and increase fullness

Mac & Cheese

- Use whole-grain or protein-enriched pasta (like chickpea or black bean pasta)
- Add vegetables (peas, broccoli, spinach, and more)
- Use less cheese but choose sharper flavors
- Stir in beans, tuna, or chicken and sprinkle with hemp seeds for protein

NOURISH Tip: Balance comfort foods with protein and fiber to support energy and muscle

Chips & Crunchy Snacks

- Choose baked or air-popped options when available
- Portion chips into a small bowl instead of eating from the bag
- Mix a small handful of chips with crunchy veggies to boost volume and fiber

Crunchy Swaps that Still Satisfy:

- Dill pickles or pickle spears
- Carrot sticks, celery, cucumber, or veggie strips
- Snap peas or bell pepper slices
- Air-popped popcorn (lightly seasoned)

NOURISH Tip:

Pair crunchy snacks with protein (cheese, hummus, yogurt dip, etc.) for longer-lasting fullness.



“If you want more pep, take a NOURISH Step!” <https://gwaar.org/nourishstep>