



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>