

# Energy Dense Shopping List



Suggestions and ideas! All items seen here support weight gain and are generally covered by nutrition assistance programs such as SNAP and WIC.



**These foods generally provide 100 or more calories/kcal per serving and can be prepared multiple ways to help achieve nutrition goals. This is by no means a comprehensive list, but we hope this may spark some creativity and help add to established family favorite menu items!**

*Why does my caregiver have this? Sometimes thinking about snacks and meals takes a lot of mental energy! It can even make us anxious and stressed. This is something we all experience at one point or another. We try to make resources like this to help make picking and exploring foods a little easier.*



*“Energy dense” means these foods have a caloric component which support your treatment goals. We all hear a lot of mixed messages in the world about what a calorie is and what calories mean for our bodies, but in this context think of calories and kcals as energy units that sustain your metabolism (i.e. all those chemical reactions in your body that support breathing, moving, thinking, and doing the things you love doing).*

Fruits & Veggies	Nutrition Facts/Suggestions	Price Range
Avocado	Can be served on the side of a meal, included in a smoothie, or on toast. Hass avocados are available year-round and a single avocado can provide anywhere from 225-250 kcal.	Expect anywhere from \$1-3 per item
Parsnip	Can be used as a side or topping. Parsnips contain around 100-150 kcal per cooked cup.	\$3-5 per pound
Rutabaga or turnips	Can be mashed, glazed, or included in stews. These veggies can net up to 75 kcal per cooked cup.	\$3-5 per item
Bananas or plantains	Can be eaten as a snack, incorporated into a smoothie, or paired with meals as a side dish or topping. Depending on size, bananas can provide 100 kcal per fruit while medium size plantains can net upwards of 250 kcal per fruit.	Bananas: \$2-5 per pound Plantains: \$1-2 per fruit
Fruit Juices	Easy additions to snacks and meals! Orange and mango juice include 100-150 kcal per 8 fluid oz serving.	\$3-15 depending on size and number of serving purchased.
Raisins	Can be eaten as a snack, paired with meals, or used as a topping. Single serving packages of 28 grams can provide up to 80 kcal per box.	Six packs of 28-gram servings: \$3-5 12-ounce containers: \$4-7
Dried Fruits	Easy additions to snacks and meals, 1 cup of dried fruits can provide anywhere from 80-100 kcal.	Depending on the fruit of choice, anywhere from \$5-10 for an 8-ounce package

Dates	Can be eaten as a snack, paired with meals as a side dish, or used as a topping. Two medjool dates provide about 150 kcal.	\$8-10 for a 12-16 oz container
Potatoes or yams	Can be baked, mashed, or roasted – sweet potatoes contain anywhere from 90-100 kcal per 100 grams. One cup of yams can bump this to 150 kcal.	\$3-5 per pound
Legumes (peas, beans, etc)	Can be added to meals as a side dish or incorporated into soups, stews, and chili. Peas net around 70-80 kcal per ½ cup. Kidney beans provide around 100 kcal per ½ cup.	15 oz cans or similarly sized bags can be found for \$1-3 on average

Grains	Nutrition Facts/Suggestions	Price Range
Porridge/oatmeal/granola	Can be used as the base of a meal or a topping. Plain oatmeal without additional toppings can reach 150 kcal per half cup.	42 oz cannisters for roughly \$8 each
Whole grain pastas	Consider hot pasta dishes, pasta salads, or incorporating into soups and stews. Around 2/3 of a cup can provide roughly 200 kcal.	\$2-6 for a 16 oz package depending on your preferred pasta shape
Rice and/or quinoa	Can be used as the base of a meal, combined with protein options, or incorporated into soups and stews. A ¼ cup serving of rice or quinoa can provide 160 kcal.	\$4-6 for a 32-ounce package of rice, \$3-6 for a 16 ounce package of quinoa
Whole grain cereals	Easy additions to breakfast! One cup of whole grain cheerios averages around 100 kcal.	\$5-7 for an 18 oz box
Sliced bread	Consider toast, sandwiches, or pairing with soups and stews. Rye bread can provide anywhere from 100-120 kcal per slice.	\$3-5 per sliced loaf

Proteins	Nutrition Facts/Suggestions	Price Range
Chicken Breast	Can be used as the base of a meal, baked, grilled, incorporated into soups and stews, shredded, or fried. A 4 oz serving of chicken can provide 120-140 kcal.	\$5-8 per pound
Nuts or Trail Mix	Easy addition to snack! Mileage will vary depending on ingredients but a standard mix containing some chocolate, almonds, cashews, dried fruit, and pecans can net 180 kcal per ¼ cup.	\$6-10 for 12-14 oz packages
Peanut Butter	Can be spread on toast, served on crackers or fruit, incorporated into smoothies, added to ice cream, or used as a topping. Around 2 tablespoons can provide 190 kcal.	\$3-6 per 16 oz jar
Eggs	Add to breakfast, stir fry meals, pan fried with rice, or used as a base in frittatas or other baked meals. A single egg can provide 60-70 kcal.	\$3-11 per dozen depending on your brand of choice
Beef or Veggie Burger Patties	Serve with buns as a sandwich or chopped and incorporated into omelets, tacos, and other dishes. One cooked beef patty can net 150-250 kcal while veggie patties average 150-200 kcal each.	Veggie patties can be found for \$3-7 per 4 count package,  Beef patties \$6-10 per 4 count package
Tuna	Consider tuna salad, using in baked and fried meal bases, or using as a topping on bagels and savory snacks. A 4 oz serving of tuna can provide around 150 kcal.	\$2-5 per 5 ounce can

Salmon	Consider using in baked and fried meal bases or using as a topping on bagels and savory snacks. Around 4 oz of salmon can provide up to 250 kcal.	\$15-20 for 20+ oz packages
Chickpeas	Can be mashed, toasted, crisped, incorporated into pasta dishes, used in soups and stews, used as a meal base, used as a side dish, or used in snacks. A half cup of chickpeas can provide anywhere from 100-150.	Prepared chickpea snacks run 5-\$8 per 12 oz package, cans of unprepared chickpeas can be found for \$3-5
Tofu	Can be fried, pan seared, incorporated into rice dishes, used in soups and stews, or served on sandwiches. A 3 oz serving can provide 90 -100 kcal.	\$2-5 per 14 oz package

Dairy	Nutrition Facts/Suggestions	Price Range
Whole Milk	Can be served as a beverage, incorporated into smoothies, or used as an ingredient in baking. One cup can provide 150 kcal.	\$2-5 per gallon jug
Greek Yogurt (full fat)	Can be used as a snack, breakfast food, or used as an ingredient in baking. Plain yogurt without toppings provides anywhere from 130-150 kcal per $\frac{3}{4}$ cup serving.	\$5-7 per 32 oz container
Hot Chocolate with Milk	Can be served with meals and desserts. Eight fluid ounces of hot chocolate powder mix without added milk can range from 100-120 kcal.	\$5-10 per multipack depending on number of desired servings
Ice Cream	Need we say more? Enjoy! A $\frac{2}{3}$ cup serving of vanilla ice cream without add-ins can provide 200 kcal.	\$5-10 per 48-ounce container, depending on flavor
Sliced or Block Cheese	Can be served sliced with crackers and fruit of choice or incorporated into other cooking. One ounce of Colby jack cheese can provide 100-110 kcal.	\$3-10 per 8 oz block, depending on preferred cheese flavor
String Cheese	Easy addition to snacks and meals! One stick can provide 80-100 kcal depending on preferred cheese type.	\$5-8 per 8 ounce or 8 pack of mozzarella cheese
Cottage Cheese (full fat)	Can be served on toast, added to scrambled eggs for additional	\$5-7 per 16-ounce container

	<p>nutrients, or incorporated into other cooking. A 4 oz serving can provide 100-120 kcal depending on the milkfat used in your preferred brand.</p>	
<p>Alternative Milk Products</p>	<p>Can be served as a beverage, incorporated into smoothies, or used as an ingredient in baking. If someone in your home is lactose intolerant, never fear! Oat milk can provide 120-150 kcal per cup depending on added flavors.</p>	<p>\$3-5 per 64-ounce container</p>



Ready To Eat Options	Nutrition Facts/Suggestions	Price Range
Grilled Chicken Breast Strips	Lunchmate brand boneless skinless fully cooked chicken. Can be thrown into a soup, burrito, taco, or eaten as a snack with chips, nachos, or crackers. You can find 200 kcal in a 6 oz package.	\$3-5 at Aldi's for packages of various sizes
Frozen Pizza and other Frozen/Microwavable Entrees	Mama Cozzi's brand frozen pizzas can be served as an entree or snack. Original pizzas net 380 kcal for every 1/3 of a 12 inch pizza. Appetitos Loaded Potato Skins can be served as a snack or side and net 300 kcal. Pizza rolls and other dumplings or pocket appetizers can net 200-300 kcal per serving. Frozen taquitos net 250-300 kcal every 3 rolls.	\$3-5 at Aldi's per pizza
Canned Soups	Cambell's "Chunky" soup line options can be served as entrees and net 200-300 kcal per can.	\$2.50-\$3.00 per can
Ready to Eat Meal Bowls	Whole & Simple (available at Aldi's and Target) can be served as an entree and net 300-400 kcal per bowl. Various rice and protein-based meal bowls available in the line.	\$4-5 per meal bowl
Premade Lasagna or Oven-Warmed Pasta Options	Can be served as an entree, 250-300 kcal per 1 cup serving for lasagnas and shepherd's pies.	\$7-15 per lasagna, various sizes at Aldi's \$5-7 per shepherd's pie, various sizes at Aldi's
	Sukhi's brand (available at Aldi's	

Refrigerated Tikka Masalas and Protein Packs	and Target) can be added to rice or other entrees or used as a quick soup/stew base. Can net 150-200 kcal per serving	\$10 at Aldi's
Garlic Bread and Grain Based Meal Sides	Mama Cozzi's Texas Toast can be added to meals and snacks for 150 kcal per slice. L'Oven Brand Bread Knots and Rolls net 150-200 kcal per knot/roll.	\$2-4 per multi-pack at Aldi's
Boxed Mac & Cheese	Cheese Club Shells and Cheese can be used as an entree or a side dish. Can net 300-360 kcal per serving.	\$3-5 per box at Aldi's and Target
Frozen Breakfast Waffles and Sandwiches	Can be served as a meal or snack. Two frozen Eggo waffles can net 180-200 kcal. Jimmy Dean breakfast sandwiches provide 350-450 kcal per sandwich	\$7-15, various sized multi-pack boxes at Aldi's and Target