# Nutrition Tip Sheet
## *Healthy Weight Gain*

Although we often hear about the obesity epidemic and the health problems associated with being overweight, there are also those who are underweight and may benefit from gaining weight. If you are one of those people and are looking to gain weight to improve your health, improve your athletic performance or just to look and feel better, it is important to do so in a smart and heart-healthy way. Here are some tips:

- **Avoid empty- calories**- boosting your calorie intake is essential to gaining weight however it is important to choose your calories wisely. Aim for well-balanced meals and snacks that include plenty of servings from each of the food groups: fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat dairy foods and lean protein. Although all foods can fit into a healthy diet, limit empty calorie foods such as soda, chips and candy as they lack important nutrients.
- **Snack smarter**- Look for healthy snacks that help you to maximize both calories and nutrients. Here are some smart snack suggestions:
  - ✓ Fruit smoothie- blend frozen fruit, yogurt or low-fat milk, fruit juice and honey until smooth.
  - ✓ Yogurt-parfait- layer Greek yogurt, whole grain cereal and fruit.
  - ✓ Trail mix- combine nuts, dried fruit and whole grain cereal
  - ✓ Whole grain English muffin topped with peanut butter
  - ✓ Whole grain crackers and hummus dip
  - ✓ Low-fat cottage cheese topped with fruit
- **Fuel up frequently-** Make sure to eat something every few hours. You can try three meals and 2-3 snacks or 5-6 smaller meals, whichever works best for you.
- **Power up with protein**- If your goal is to gain muscle mass, the key is proper strength training combined with adequate calories and protein. Great protein sources include lean meats, seafood, beans, eggs, nuts and nut butters.
- **Think about your drink-** in addition to boosting calories, beverages can help to keep you hydrated. Choose nutrient-rich beverages such as low-fat milk or 100% fruit juice. If you have a small appetite, limit fluids during meals and instead drink in between meals to leave more room for your food at mealtimes.
- **Concentrate your calories-** to increase your calorie intake, rather than adding more food to your plate, try sneaking calories into the foods you are already eating such as topping your salad with sunflower seeds, adding a slice of cheese to your sandwich, preparing oatmeal or soup with milk instead of water, or adding dry milk powder to casseroles.