

Nutrition & Food Services

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HIGH ENERGY EATING

Children need enough energy, protein and nutrients to grow. During periods of illness some children require extra energy to promote weight gain or to achieve catch up growth. A high energy and high protein diet is recommended for your child to meet these needs.

While getting enough energy to grow is important, so is eating a balanced diet to provide plenty of nutrients such as protein, fat, vitamins and minerals. This means including foods each day from the following groups.

Breads and Cereals: including bread, rice, pasta, noodles and breakfast cereal.

Fruits and Vegetables: including fresh, frozen, tinned or dried.

Meat and Meat Alternatives: including meat, fish, chicken, eggs, nuts and legumes like baked beans or lentils.

Milk and Dairy Foods: including milk, cheese and yoghurt.

Fats and Oils: including margarine, butter, oil and cream.

Generally there are two ways to increase the energy in a child's diet:

1. EAT MORE FOOD

The easiest way to do this is by eating snacks between meals. It is possible that main meals will have to be slightly smaller to achieve this. Offer 6 small meals each day rather than 3 big meals and 3 small snacks.

Nutritious snacks include:

- Toast with peanut butter or avocado
- Cheese and crackers
- Full fat yoghurt or custard with fruit
- Eggs or baked beans on toast
- Hummus or cream cheese dip with crackers and vegetables
- Fruit smoothies made with yoghurt/cream and milk
- Whole nuts (if over 5 years – nut pastes are suitable for younger children)

OR

2. INCREASE THE ENERGY CONTENT OF FOOD EATEN

By using the following high energy additions to food:

Butter and margarine:

Melt over vegetables, rice and pasta. Spread thickly on bread and toast. Spread on sweet and savoury biscuits.

Plant-based oil e.g. olive oil:

Add oil to any cooked dishes especially vegetables. Try stir fry vegetables or fried rice. Brush oil on meat after grilling food for the rest of the family and use oil based salad dressings.

Avocado:

Spread on toast or crackers. Try to include in sandwiches or puree and eat as a dip or add to other pureed foods.

Mayonnaise and dips e.g. hummus

Use as a spread in salad sandwiches, mix with tuna or egg to use on dry biscuits or in sandwiches. Use as a salad dressing or serve with fish cakes or fish fingers.

Cheese

Add grated cheese to soups, pasta, casseroles, mashed potato, scrambled eggs, tinned spaghetti or baked beans or melted on vegetables. Use cream cheese in dips or spread on biscuits and bread.

Cream

Add to milk, breakfast cereals, desserts, custard, yoghurt, sauces and soups.

Milk

Use full cream milk rather than the reduced fat options. Make soups and puddings with milk instead of water. Add 1 tablespoon of milk powder (full cream) per cup of milk to create a higher energy and protein milk to use for drinks and cooking.

Sauces

Use gravies and sauces where possible on vegetables and meat dishes.

WHAT ABOUT 'JUNK FOODS' SUCH AS LOLLIES AND TAKEAWAY?

Although high energy snack foods such as lollies, chocolate and chips contain lots of energy, they are very low in vitamins and minerals that are required for your child's growth. They will also reduce your child's appetite for nourishing foods. They are only recommended occasionally.

FOOD IDEAS

Thinking of fun, appetising and interesting snacks or meals can be hard work. Try tempting their taste buds with these ideas.

<p>Breakfast</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Toast: Spread with mashed avocado, cream cheese or peanut butter.• Raisin toast and margarine/butter.• Crumpets with butter and honey.• Porridge made with milk and cream.• Full fat yoghurt and toasted muesli• Scrambled eggs or omelette made with cream and grated cheese• Croissants with butter and jam or cheese and ham.	<p>Lunch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Soup: Choose cream of chicken, pumpkin, tomato etc. Make tinned soups up with milk rather than water. Serve with toast and butter and cheese.• Toasted sandwiches or jaffles with margarine and fillings such as ham, cheese, baked beans, roasted vegetables or leftovers. Ensure you butter both sides of the bread.• Sandwich with cheese, cold meats and spreads such as avocado or dip.
<p>Dinner</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Muffin Pizzas: Spread a toasted muffin with tomato paste, top with some chopped ham, onion and capsicum and smother it all in grated cheese and grill.• Add white (cheese) sauce to chicken, fish and vegetables.• Noodles or pasta with butter and cheese or a creamy sauce e.g. macaroni cheese. Grate in vegetables for a nutrient boost.• Jacket potatoes with toppings including butter, sour cream, coleslaw, meat and cheese.• Mashed potato made with cream and butter. Top with grated cheese.• Homemade nachos with minced meat, sour cream, kidney beans, salsa and grated cheese• Fried rice with egg, meat, vegetables and oil.	<p>Snacks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Crackers with avocado, cheese, cream cheese, peanut butter, tahini or hummus.• Tubs of yoghurt (full cream).• Custard or other dairy desserts.• Hardboiled egg• Whole nuts (if over 5 years)• Dried fruit

DRINK IDEAS

- Add 1 tablespoon of milk powder (full cream) per cup of milk to create a higher energy and protein milk
- Smoothies – blend milk, yoghurt and fruit to make a nourishing drink. Banana, frozen/fresh berries and tinned fruit all blend well.
- Milkshakes – Creamy milkshakes made with milk, ice-cream and flavourings such as milo or ice-cream topping make a high energy drink.

HELPFUL HINTS:

To help your child eat well, it is important to make meal times as relaxed and happy as possible.

Try the following ideas:

- Serve the main meal when your child is hungry - this might be at lunchtime for infants and toddlers. Be flexible.
- Three small meals and three snacks between meals often help to improve appetites.
- Try a dessert after main meals.
- Look at how much fluid your child drinks at mealtimes. Try separating drinks from meals to increase the amount eaten, and don't offer drinks shortly before meals. Avoid lots of sweet drinks such as juice, cordial and lemonade.
- Tempt your child with interesting novelties like fancy drinking straws, decorated cups and plates, vegetables and sandwiches cut to various shapes.
- A change of venue such as a picnic outside or on the floor sometimes helps. Eating with other children may encourage your child to eat more.
- Make mealtimes as relaxed as possible without distractions such as television. Try to get all the family to eat together.
- Remember to give lots of positive encouragement when your child does eat and even if they don't, try and compliment them for any good behaviour such as sitting at the table.
- BE PATIENT - Hardest of all!

For some children who have lost weight or are struggling to gain weight despite food modification, supplements such as Sustagen or Pediasure may be appropriate. These drinks provide extra energy, protein and nutrients. Speak to your dietitian or doctor to ensure they are appropriate for your child.