



Foods to Increase Your Child's Calories and Protein

Ideas to use different foods to add more calories and protein to your child's diet

Your child needs food and nutrition to stay well. Extra nutrition is needed when children are sick, healing or need to gain weight. This list of foods will help you plan meals to give your child extra nutrition.

When reading food labels, choose foods with higher calories. Try not to use "light," "non-fat" or "reduced fat" foods.

Foods below marked with asterisks (*) are also high in protein.

Tips on how to add calories and protein to foods

Meat, poultry and fish*

- Add chopped, cooked meat, poultry or fish to vegetables, salads, soups, casseroles, sauces, biscuit dough and mashed or baked potatoes.
- Use in omelets, soufflés, quiches, sandwich fillings and stuffing.
- Wrap in tortillas, pie crust or biscuit dough for turnovers.
- Higher calorie meats and fish: salmon, mackerel, dark poultry, higher fat cuts of beef and pork (ask at your local grocery store), game meats, organ meats, bacon and tuna canned in oil.

Dairy products

Whole milk*

Use whole milk in milk-based drinks and in place of water when cooking. Whole milk provides more calories than lower-fat milk.

- Use in preparing hot cereal, soups, cocoa and puddings.
- Canned evaporated milk can be used in place of milk for most recipes.

Powdered milk*

- Add to regular milk and milk drinks, such as milkshakes.
- Use in casseroles, meatloaf, breads, muffins, sauces, cream soups, mashed potatoes, puddings, custards and other milk-based desserts.

Cream and half-and-half

- Use in soups, casseroles, sauces, egg or cheese dishes, batters, puddings and custards.
- Put on hot or cold cereal.
- Mix with pasta, noodles and rice.
- Pour a cream sauce on fish or chicken while baking.
- Use as a binder in meatloaf, hamburgers and croquettes.
- Use in place of water in recipes.
- Use sweet whipped cream in or on top of desserts, gelatin, hot chocolate, puddings, fruits, pancakes and waffles.
- Fold unsweetened whipped cream into mashed potatoes, pastas or vegetable recipes.

Cheese*

- Melt on sandwiches, breads, muffins, tortillas, hamburgers, meats, vegetables, eggs, fruit or pies, and tortilla chips.
- Grate and add to soups, sauces, rice, pasta, beans, casseroles, meatloaf, vegetable dishes, mashed potatoes and biscuit dough.

Cottage cheese and ricotta cheese*

- Add to casseroles, spaghetti, noodles, and egg dishes such as omelets, scrambled eggs and soufflés.
- Use in gelatin, pudding-type desserts, pancake batter or cheesecake.
- Use to stuff fruits, vegetables, crepes and pasta shells.

Sour cream

- Add to cream-based soups, casseroles, potatoes, macaroni and cheese, vegetables, sauces, salad dressing, baked meats, chicken and fish.
- Use as a topping for cakes, pies, fruit, gelatin, desserts, breads and muffins.
- Use as a dip for fresh fruit and vegetables.

Cream cheese

- Spread on breads, muffins, fruit slices and crackers.
- Use to make dips, sauces, desserts and dressings.
- Roll into balls and coat with chopped nuts, wheat germ or granola.

Ice cream, yogurt and frozen yogurt

- Top with chocolate or other flavored syrups and sauces.
- Add nuts, candies, granola, fruits, sweetened whipped cream, cereals, gelatin, desserts and pies.
- Add to soda or milk to make floats.
- Blend with soft or canned fruits.
- Sandwich ice cream or frozen yogurt between cake slices, cookies or graham crackers.

Eggs*

- Do not use raw eggs, because they may make your child sick. Make sure all eggs are well cooked or baked. Do not use eggs that are runny. Pasteurized egg products, such as EggBeaters, may be used uncooked for egg-nogs and drinks.
- Add chopped, hard-boiled eggs to salads, dressings, sandwich spreads, vegetables, casseroles and creamed meats.
- Make pudding with eggs, milk and sugar.
- Beat eggs into mashed potatoes, vegetable purees and sauces. **Make sure to cook well after egg is added.**
- Add extra eggs or egg whites to custards, puddings, quiches, and to pancake and French toast batter before cooking.

Soy, tofu and tempeh*

- Try soy milk with cereals and lattes, and when baking.
- Try soy puddings and yogurts as snacks.
- Use soy protein powder in smoothies and shakes.
- Mix tempeh with vegetables or legumes for burger-type patties.

Beans and legumes*

- Use cooked dried peas, legumes, beans and bean curd (tofu) in soups.
- Add to casseroles, pastas and any dishes that may contain cheese or meat.
- Mash beans and add cheese and sour cream for nachos or a dip.
- Mash and use as a filling for pitas, tortillas and sandwiches.

Nut, seed and soy butters*

- Spread on sandwiches, toast, muffins, crackers, waffles and pancakes.
- Use as a dip for fruits and vegetables, such as carrots, cauliflower and celery.
- Blend with milk-based drinks and beverages.
- Swirl through ice cream or yogurt.

Nuts*, seeds, wheat germ and granola

- Finely chop or grind nuts and seeds for small children.
- Add to casseroles, breads, muffins, pancakes, cookies and waffles.
- Sprinkle on fruit, cereal, ice cream, puddings, yogurt, vegetables, salads and toast.
- Blend with spinach, herbs and cream to make pasta or vegetable sauces.
- Layer with fruits and bake as a crisp or crumble.

Dried fruits

- Add to muffins, cookies, breads, cakes, rice and grain dishes, cereals, puddings and stuffing.
- Bake in pies and turnovers.
- Combine with cooked vegetables such as carrots, sweet potatoes, yams and squash.
- Mix with nuts or granola for snacks.

Butter, margarine and oil

- Add to soups, hot cereals, grits, rice, mashed and baked potatoes, pastas and cooked vegetables.

Honey, jam and sugar

- Add to bread, cereal, milk, fruit, ice cream and yogurt.
- Make a glaze for meats.

Salad dressings, dips and mayonnaise

- Spread on sandwiches, crackers, or burgers.
- Mix with meats, poultry, fish, eggs, beans and salads.
- Use in sauces, gelatin dishes and creamy salad dressings.
- Make tartar sauce, guacamole and creamy dressings as dip for fruits, vegetables, chips and French fries.

Sauces and gravies

- Use cheese sauce on baked potatoes, casseroles and vegetables.
- Prepare gravy by using cooked meat drippings, flour, and milk or cream.
- Use on mashed potatoes, stuffing, vegetables and meats.

Supplemental drinks*

Many commercial supplemental drinks are available. Your dietitian can help you try some. Check with your healthcare provider first before giving any type of vitamin or supplement to your child. These may be helpful when your child is not eating well. Some options include Boost Kid Essentials, PediaSure, Boost, Ensure, Boost Breeze, Ensure Clear, Carnation Breakfast Essentials and Scandishake.

Example of how to make changes to your child's diet

Breakfast

Regular menu

- 1 bagel
- 1 tsp. margarine
- ½ cup strawberries
- 2 eggs, scrambled
- 1 cup 2% milk

Higher calorie & protein menu

- 1 bagel
- 2 Tbsp. cream cheese
- ½ cup strawberries
- 2 Tbsp. whipped cream
- 2 eggs, scrambled with butter
- 1 cup whole milk

Morning snack

Regular menu

- 1 flour tortilla
- 2 oz cheese

Higher calorie & protein menu

- 1 flour tortilla, brushed with oil
- 2 oz cheese

Lunch

Regular menu

- 2 slices whole wheat bread
- 2 Tbsp. nut butter
- 1 Tbsp. jelly
- 1 banana
- 1 cup 2% milk

Higher calorie & protein menu

- 2 slices whole wheat bread, buttered
- 2 Tbsp. nut butter
- 1 Tbsp. jelly
- 1 banana sliced with whipped cream
- 1 cup whole milk

Afternoon snack

Regular menu

- 3 to 4 graham crackers
- ½ cup fruit cocktail

Higher calorie & protein menu

- 3 to 4 graham crackers
- 1 Tbsp. nut butter
- ½ cup fruit cocktail

To Learn More

- Nutrition
206-987-4758
- Your child's dietitian:

- Ask your child's
healthcare provider
- www.seattlechildrens.org

Free Interpreter Services

- In the hospital, ask your child's nurse.
- From outside the hospital, call the toll-free Family Interpreting Line 1-866-583-1527. Tell the interpreter the name or extension you need.

Dinner

Regular menu

- ½ cup pasta
- ½ cup tomato sauce
- ½ cup corn
- Breadstick
- 1 cup 2% milk

Higher calorie & protein menu

- ½ cup pasta
- ½ cup cream sauce with meat
- 2 Tbsp parmesan cheese
- ½ cup corn
- 1 slice buttered garlic bread
- 1 cup whole milk

Night snack

Regular menu

- ½ cup raw broccoli
- 1 oz pretzels
- ½ cup fruit juice

Higher calorie & protein menu

- ½ cup raw broccoli
- 2 Tbsp. Ranch dip
- 1 oz pretzels with cream cheese
- ½ cup whole milk

Seattle Children's offers interpreter services for Deaf, hard of hearing or non-English speaking patients, family members and legal representatives free of charge. Seattle Children's will make this information available in alternate formats upon request. Call the Family Resource Center at 206-987-2201.

This handout has been reviewed by clinical staff at Seattle Children's. However, your child's needs are unique. Before you act or rely upon this information, please talk with your child's healthcare provider.

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