



# High Calorie High Protein Diet for Infants

Patient and Family Education

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## Why do some infants have trouble gaining weight?

Your baby may not gain enough weight if he:

- Does not take in enough calories
- Loses calories from malabsorption
- Uses up a lot of calories due to illness or infection.
- Many illnesses such as lung or heart problems

If your baby has had surgery, he will need extra calories to heal, as well as to grow and gain weight.

## How can I help my baby to gain more weight?

- **Offer high calorie breast-milk or formula.** Your nutritionist or doctor may give you a recipe on how to make breast-milk mixed with formula or high calorie formula. It is important that you make the formula the exact way that your doctor or nutritionist tells you. A mistake in mixing the formula may make your baby very sick.
- **Limit intake of "fillers".** Drinks such as juice, Gatorade<sup>®</sup>, water, punch or tea will fill up your baby but will not help him gain weight. Avoid giving these beverages all together. Baby foods are also low in calories. Limit baby foods to **3 ounces a day** once your baby is eating solids.
- **Offer many small meals.** The size of your baby's stomach is very small so he cannot eat a large amount of food at one time. Give your baby 5 - 6 small meals a day. Strained foods should be offered at 6 months of age. Before that age your baby may need to drink breast-milk or formula 6-10 times per day.

## What kinds of foods should I offer my baby to help him gain weight?

Foods that have the most calories can help your baby gain weight. Read the labels on baby foods and choose the food with the highest amount of calories. Some examples of low calorie and high calorie foods to choose from are listed below:

Low Calorie	
Applesauce	50 calories in 3.5 ounce pkg.
Green beans	30 calories in 3.5 ounce pkg.
Carrots	35 calories in 3.5 ounce pkg.
Squash	35 calories in 3.5 ounce pkg.
Dinners	60 – 80 calories in 4 ounce jar

**In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room right away.**

This is general information and is not specific medical advice for your child. Always consult your child's doctor or other healthcare provider if you have any questions or concerns about the care or health of your child. A Children's Healthcare of Atlanta pediatric advice nurse is available 24 hours a day at 404-250-KIDS.

# High Calorie High Protein Diet for Infants, continued

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<b>High Calorie</b>	
Bananas	90 calories in 3.5 ounce pkg.
Peaches	60 calories in 3.5 ounce pkg.
Pears	70 calories in 3.5 ounce pkg.
Sweet Potatoes	70 calories in 3.5 ounce pkg.
Peas	50 calories in 3.5 ounce pkg.
Plain Meats	70 - 100 calories in 2.5 ounce jar

## How can I add more calories to the foods that my baby eats?

### Fat

- Adding margarine, butter, or vegetable oil to your baby's cereal, meats, or cooked vegetables can add as much as 45 calories per teaspoon. Never add more than 1 teaspoon per every  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of food (4 ounce jar or  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ounce package of baby food).

### Carbohydrate

- You may add "Polycose" or "Moducal" to your baby's foods. These do not change the taste of food because they are tasteless. They can be purchased in the pharmacy section of your local grocery store or discount store. Have the pharmacist order it for you if it is not available. Ask your child's nutritionist or doctor how to add these safely to foods.

### Protein

- Put sliced cheese on bread or sprinkle grated cheese on infant cereal, or on potatoes. Cheese can be introduced at around 8 months of age provided the baby is not allergic to milk.
- Use high calorie formula to make infant cereal, cream soups or potatoes.
- Offer plain strained meats instead of meat dinners. These special dinner foods contain a lot of starchy fillers and do not have as much protein as plain meats. To improve the taste of strained meats, mix them with vegetables just before serving.

## Are there any foods that I should not add to my baby's foods?

- Corn syrup and honey should not be added to your baby's formula or foods. This can make them sick (causing Botulism).
- Plain sugar should not be added to your baby's food. This may cause diarrhea.

## How much weight should my baby be gaining?

A baby will gain a lot of weight in the first 3 - 4 months of life but then weight gain slows down. Boys will gain more weight than girls.

Your baby should gain \_\_\_\_\_ ounces each week, or \_\_\_\_\_ each month.

## Who should I call if I have questions about high calorie high protein diets?

Call your child's nutritionist or your child's doctor.

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