



High Calorie High Protein Diet for Toddlers and Preschoolers

Patient and Family Education

How can I get my child to eat more?

Below are some ideas that may help your child to eat more:

- **Try finger foods.** Preschoolers may enjoy finger foods because they are easy to eat and they do not need any help from you. Some examples of finger foods are: Fish sticks, cheese sticks, cut-up fruits and vegetables.
- **Let your child help with meals.** Let your child help to make the meal, it may help boost his interest in eating. Help him to pour cereal into a bowl, set the table, or wash vegetables. Your child will be much more likely to try foods that he helped to make.
- **Let him pick one of the foods that will make up the meal.** For example, ask your child whether he would like green beans or peas with dinner.
- **Offer many small meals and snacks.** Do not force your child to eat more. They get full faster than you do. The size of your child's stomach is very small, so he cannot eat a large amount of food at one time. Give him 4 -5 small meals a day.
- **Keep meal times quiet.** Preschoolers are easily distracted during meal times. Try to make meal times quiet so that your child can focus on eating. Leave the TV turned off during meals.
- **Offer whole milk with meals and water or other beverage with snacks.** Limit fruit juice and sweetened beverage to 4-6 ounces per day.

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

- Foods that have the most calories, fat and protein can help your child gain weight. Read the labels on foods and choose the food with the highest amount of calories.
- Meats, milk, cheeses, eggs and breads are higher in calories than fruits and vegetables. If your child is over age 2, you can also use creamy peanut butter spread thinly on crackers or toast.
- Dried fruits are higher in calories than fresh fruit so offer raisins, dried apples or bananas when your child wants fruit.
- Fruit nectar, avocado, and canned fruit in heavy syrup are also high in calories.
- Use whole milk and regular cheese and yogurts.
- Offer cream soups since they have more calories and protein than clear soups.
- Cornbread, muffins, pancakes, granola and granola bars, and high fat crackers.
- Avoid giving calorie-free drinks and fat-free or low fat products.

What can I add to my child's food to give it more calories?

Fat:

- Adding margarine, butter, or vegetable oil to grits, cream soups, oatmeal, meats, or cooked vegetables can add as much as 45 calories per teaspoon.
- Add a small amount of mayonnaise, sour cream, whipped cream, grated cheese, cheese sauce or gravy to food.
- Use ranch dressing, caramel spread and other dips for fruits, vegetables and chips.
- Fried foods are higher in calories.

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 Toddlers, continued

- Use half and half in place of milk or water. Add whipping cream to desserts.
- Add brown sugar, honey or maple syrup to hot or cold cereals, beverages or desserts.

Protein:

- If your child is over the age of 2, spread creamy peanut butter on bread, toast or crackers, and soft fruits such as bananas.
- Mix 1 Tablespoon of non-fat dry skim milk powder into grits, oatmeal, gravies, soups, and sauces.
- Add cooked eggs to hot cereals (such as grits or oatmeal), soups, salads, vegetables and casseroles.
- Sprinkle grated cheese on potatoes, hot cereals or on top of soups. Melt in meats, vegetables, pasta and rice.
- Use ice cream to make milkshakes, sundaes, banana split, and ice cream sandwiches (put ice cream in between cookies or graham crackers).
- Dried beans and tofu are other meat substitutes.
- Make "Double-Strength Milk"
Recipe: Add 2 Tablespoons of non-fat dry skim milk powder to 1 cup whole milk.
Use this to make hot cereal, add it to cold cereals, mashed potatoes, gravy, scrambled eggs, cream soups, pudding or for drinking.
- Add powdered instant breakfast to whole milk or use high calorie supplement drinks such as Pediasure[®] or Kindercal[®]. Pediasure can be bought at most grocery stores and Kindercal is available to order through most pharmacies. Try to have your child drink _____ cups/cans each day.

How much weight should my child be gaining?

Your preschooler should gain about _____ pounds each month.

Where can I get more information?

Below are some books that may be helpful with high calorie high protein diets:

- *Child of Mine. Feeding With Love and Good Sense* by Ellyn Satter, RD, ACSW
- *How to Get Your Kid to Eat...But Not Too Much* by Ellyn Satter, RD, ACSW

Who should I call if I have questions about a high calorie high protein diet?

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

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