

## High Calorie Diet for Children

Many toddlers, kids, and teens need to eat high calorie diets to help with weight gain, catch-up growth, and recovery from illness. At times, this can be harder than it seems. This guide will help you choose a healthy, high calorie diet.

Ways to add calories to the diet include:

- Eating small, frequent meals. Add extra snacks during and after school and before bed.
- Using nutritional supplements.
- Cooking with extra calories.
- Choosing higher calorie versions of foods.

### Eating Small, Frequent Meals

It can be hard to eat a high calorie diet if you get full easily. It may help to eat 6 times per day instead of 3 times per day. Try the eating schedule below:

**7:00 am:** Bagel with cream cheese, banana, and 8 ounces whole milk

**10:00 am:** 1 container whole milk yogurt

**12:00 pm:** Peanut butter and jelly sandwich, fruit cup, 8 ounces whole milk

**3:00 pm:** ½ cup trail mix

**6:00 pm:** 1 cup pasta with meat sauce and cheese drizzled with olive oil, carrots with butter, and celery with ranch dip, 8 ounces whole milk.

**8:00 pm:** 8-ounce milkshake

The snacks add up to an extra 900 calories per day. Regular snacks in between meals are not the same as grazing. Munching on food and drinks throughout the day tends to

reduce appetite. Only allow water between meals and snacks.

### Adding Calories with Nutritional Supplements

There are many nutritional supplements that can be added to a meal in place of a lower calorie drink or used for high calorie snacks. For example, an 8-ounce cup of 2% milk provides 120 calories while an 8-ounce glass of whole milk mixed with Carnation Instant Breakfast<sup>®</sup> powder provides 280 calories.

You can also use liquid supplements when you cook and to make shakes, smoothies, or puddings. They can replace the milk in a recipe. Try to add unflavored calorie powders to foods. You can find these at drug stores, grocery stores, or through mail order. Check with your health care provider to find out if you can get any of these at a reduced cost or for free.

### Liquid Supplements

- Pediasure<sup>®</sup>
- Pediasure 1.5<sup>®</sup>
- Carnation Breakfast Essentials<sup>®</sup>
- Boost Kids Essentials<sup>®</sup>
- Boost Kids Essentials 1.5<sup>®</sup>
- Ensure Original<sup>®</sup>
- Ensure Plus<sup>®</sup>
- Ensure Clear or Boost Breeze<sup>®</sup>
- Bright Beginnings Soy<sup>®</sup>
- Kate Farms<sup>®</sup> (pea protein, gluten free)
- Orgain and Vegan Orgain<sup>®</sup>
- Lutrish Shake<sup>®</sup>

Check for store brands that cost less money.

Please check with your registered dietitian if you need a special formula or have food allergies.

If you do not want to use a store-bought product, you can make a homemade high calorie shake with ice cream or whole milk yogurt, protein powder, fruit and/or veggies, ground flaxseed, and nut butters.

### **Cooking with Extra Calories**

There are many ways to add calories to your favorite dishes and foods while adding extra flavor and nutrients.

### **Meat and Meat Alternatives**

- Add diced or ground meat, poultry, fish, tofu or eggs to soups, casseroles, quiches, sandwich fillings, dips, or salads.
- Dried peas, beans, or tofu can be cooked/pureed and added to casseroles, vegetables, pasta, and grain dishes.
- Spread peanut butter, sunflower seed butter, soy nut butter, or cashew/almond butter on fruits and vegetables. Add it to sandwiches, crackers, toast, waffles, pancakes, bagels, cookies, and muffins.
- Use nuts\* and seeds to garnish vegetables, entrees, salads, and desserts. Have nuts, seeds, or trail mix for snacks. \*(Use ground nuts for children under 3 years of age).
- Spread hummus on pita bread or use as a dip with raw vegetables.
- Stir whey powder into casseroles, pudding, or yogurt.

### **Starches, Breads, and Cereals**

- Add wheat germ to meat, bread, muffin, and pancake recipes. Sprinkle it on fruit, ice cream, yogurt, vegetables, and toast to add a crunchy topping.

- Sprinkle granola on cereal, ice cream, or yogurt.
- Mix Duocal<sup>®</sup> into bread, muffin, and pancake recipes.

### **Dairy**

- Use whole milk.
- Make “super milk” by blending milk with dry milk powder using one cup dry powder for each quart (or 4 cups) of milk. Substitute this for milk in cooking when you can. You can also make a mixture of half milk and cream.
- Use milk or cream instead of water in soups, cocoa, pudding mixes, hot cereal and baked products.
- Add dry milk powder by mixing one or more tablespoons into foods. Use it in eggs, soups, mashed potatoes, pastas, ground meats, casseroles, desserts, milkshakes, puddings, yogurts, muffins, and hot cereals.
- Use cheese or cheese spread on sliced fruit, crackers, or bread.
- Add grated cheese or chunks of cheese to sauces, vegetables, soups, rice, mashed potatoes, noodles, and casseroles. Melt cheese on sandwiches, hamburgers, vegetables, and eggs.
- Spread cream cheese on sandwiches, fruit slices, and crackers. Roll cream cheese into balls and coat with chopped nuts, wheat germ, or granola.
- Dip fruit in yogurt or flavored sour cream.

## **Fruits and Vegetables**

- Add dried fruits to muffins, cookies, breads, cakes, rice, cereals and stuffings. Combine dried fruits with cooked vegetables such as carrots, sweet potatoes, and squash. Mix with nuts or granola for high calorie snacks. Dried fruit also makes a great snack.
- Add sliced avocado on your sandwich or salad. Dip veggies and chips in guacamole.

## **Fats**

- Spread mayo on breads.
- Use butter or margarine on breads, hot cereals, noodles, eggs, and vegetables.
- Sprinkle shredded coconut on trail mix, cereal, oatmeal, ice cream, and yogurt.
- Add large black or green olives to salads, tacos, nachos, and pastas.
- Drizzle vegetable oil over noodles and vegetables or use when making eggs.
- Add ground flaxseed powder to muffin, pancake, and cookie batters or mix into smoothies.
- Spread Nutella® on bagels, toast, waffles, or fruit.

## **Choose Higher Calorie Versions of Foods**

### **Instead of eating corn flakes or rice cereal, try:**

- Frosted Wheat Biscuits
- Raisin Bran
- Granola
- Muesli

### **Instead of eating low fat yogurt, try:**

- Whole milk yogurt or cottage cheese (often labeled as 4% fat)
- Yogurt with maple syrup added.
- Pudding made with whole milk or cream.
- Greek yogurt which has extra protein

### **Instead of making sandwiches on regular bread, try:**

- High calorie whole grain breads like Brownberry®, Natural Ovens®, or Earth Grains®
- Whole grain bagels
- Whole grain pita pockets
- Large flour tortillas

### **Instead of snacking on a low-fat granola bar, try:**

- Power Bars®
- Clif Bars®
- Balance Bars®
- Trail mix
- Chocolate covered granola bars.
- Pretzels stuffed with nut butter or cheese.

## **Who to Call**

If you are a UW Health patient and have more questions, please call UW Health at one of the phone numbers listed below. You can also visit our website at [www.uwhealth.org/nutrition](http://www.uwhealth.org/nutrition)

Nutrition clinics for UW Hospital and Clinics (UWHC) and American Family Children's Hospital (AFCH) can be reached at **(608) 890-5500**.