

# FACTSHEET

This fact sheet is for education purposes only. Please consult with your doctor or other health professionals to make sure this information is right for your child. If you would like to provide feedback on this fact sheet, please visit: [www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/fact-sheets/feedback-form](http://www.schn.health.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/fact-sheets/feedback-form).

## High Energy Eating for Children

This information is for children who have difficulty gaining weight. If you are concerned about your child's growth you should speak to your GP, Paediatrician or Early Childhood Nurse. A dietitian can provide advice on feeding your child.

This information, with its food examples, is intended for educational purposes only and does not constitute SCHN/JHCH endorsement of any particular branded food product.

Some children need added protein and energy to assist with their weight gain and growth. The table below provides some suggestions for increasing the energy and protein content of your child's diet:

| Food/fluid                              | Uses to boost energy and protein   |
|---|--|
| Oil<br>= high energy                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use for frying meats</li> <li>• Add into mashed vegetables (e.g. mashed potato)</li> <li>• Drizzle over the top of rice, noodles, pasta and vegetables</li> </ul>   |
| Margarine<br>= high energy              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above with oil; plus</li> <li>• Spread thickly on sandwiches, toast, crackers and biscuits</li> </ul>  |
| Meat and alternatives<br>= high protein | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fry with oil</li> <li>• Examples include beef, chicken, lamb, pork and fish.</li> <li>• Try making meatballs or patties using beef mince, chicken mince or cooked fish.</li> <li>• Baked beans, lentils and legumes are meat alternatives. To boost the energy content add margarine, grated cheese or oil.</li> <li>• Double up protein in a sandwich by including meat and cheese together, or use 2 layers of meat.</li> </ul> |
| Avocado<br>= high energy                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use as a spread on sandwiches and crackers</li> <li>• Mash with sour cream and use as a dip with vegetables or crackers.</li> </ul>   |
| Egg<br>= high protein                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be used as a binder in foods such as meatballs.</li> <li>• Use to dip toast "soldiers" into egg yolk</li> <li>• Make high energy scrambled eggs using cream, cheese, oil. Add ham or bacon if desired.</li> <li>• Mash egg with mayonnaise to use as a sandwich filling</li> </ul>  |
| Dairy products                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full fat dairy products are recommended for children under the age of 2 years. If your child is having difficulty gaining weight, full fat dairy is recommended.</li> </ul>   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| = high protein                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examples include milk, yoghurt, cheese, cream cheese, custard, ice cream, sour cream.</li> <li>• Include dairy-based snacks regularly through the day e.g. yoghurt/custard with fruit pieces to dip, cream cheese as a dip or spread on crackers/sandwiches, cheese cubes or cheese sticks</li> <li>• See recipe for high protein milk on next page</li> </ul> |
| Cheese<br>= high protein                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grate into vegetables, pasta, rice, bolognaise sauce, casseroles, baked beans or tinned spaghetti on toast</li> <li>• Add to sandwiches</li> <li>• Make a cheese sauce to serve on vegetables</li> </ul>   |
| Cream<br>= high energy                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Add to yoghurt &amp; custard</li> <li>• Mix into mashed potato and other mashed vegetables</li> <li>• Add to soups or casseroles</li> <li>• Mix into cereals e.g. Weetbix, porridge</li> </ul>   |
| Nuts & seeds<br>= high protein, high energy | <p><b>** Note whole nuts are a choking hazard for children under 5 years **</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use smooth peanut butter or other nut spreads on sandwiches, toast, biscuits, crackers</li> <li>• Use hommus as a spread on sandwiches, crackers or as a dip</li> </ul>  |
| Other high energy options                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose honey, jam, Nutella™ and peanut butter for spreads</li> <li>• Choose milk or fruit juice over water</li> <li>• Add Milo™ or flavoured toppings to ice-cream and milk drinks</li> </ul>  |

### Tips to increase your child's intake:

- Replace “low fat” or “diet” foods with full cream/full calorie options
- Choose foods that need less chewing and are easier to eat (e.g. mince meat/meatballs are easier to chew than a steak/chops)
- Include high energy and high protein foods at each meal and snack through the day
- Aim to include 3 meals and 2-3 snacks through the day
- Don't let your child drink a lot of fluid around mealtimes – this can fill them up
- Add sauces, gravies, dressings to food
- Always serve fruit/vegetables with a dip e.g. yoghurt, custard, hommus, cream cheese, avocado
- Be prepared: take ready-to-eat high energy snacks when going out, e.g. tub of yoghurt/custard, cheese & crackers, crackers/biscuits with a spread, mini container with dip and pre-cut vegies, nut spread on crackers.

Refer to “managing toddler mealtimes” factsheet for strategies to manage mealtime behaviours.

### Meal ideas:

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Breakfast:</b></p> <p>Porridge made on milk with added cream, sugar/honey</p> <p>Egg on toast with melted cheese and avocado spread</p> <p>Cereal with milk, cream and added sugar/honey/dried fruit</p> <p>Baked beans with melted cheese on toast spread with margarine</p> <p>Peanut butter on toast</p> | <p><b>Lunch:</b></p> <p>Toasted cheese sandwich with ham, tomato, margarine spread on both sides of the bread</p> <p>Sandwich with: egg &amp; mayonnaise, chicken &amp; avocado, sliced meat (e.g. ham, turkey, beef) &amp; cheese</p> <p>Mini pizzas</p> <p>Leftovers from last night's dinner</p> |
| <p><b>Dinner:</b></p> <p>Crumbed chicken pieces or fish fingers served with</p>   | <p><b>Snacks:</b></p> <p>Yoghurt, custard, Fruche™, Yogo™, icecream, frozen</p>   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| vegetables drizzled with oil or topped with white sauce<br>Risotto made with cream, parmesan cheese and bacon<br>Casserole with added oil or margarine, served with<br>mashed potato and grated cheese<br>Quiche or omelette with cheese, ham, tomato<br>Macaroni cheese or tuna mornay<br>Nachos with mince meat, cheese, sour cream, avocado<br>Potato bake with creamy sauce & cheese | yoghurt<br>Creamy rice pudding e.g. Le Rice™<br>Crackers with cheese or spread with hommus/avocado<br>Tinned fruit or fruit pieces with custard, icecream, yoghurt<br>Flavoured milk or a smoothie made with high protein milk,<br>added icecream, honey, malt, cream, yoghurt, Milo™ or<br>Nutella™<br>Cereal with high protein milk<br>Nuts (** not for children under 5 years due to choking<br>risk) with yoghurt and dried fruit OR peanut butter on<br>crackers |
|--|---|

### High protein milk recipe:

To every 1 cup of milk, add 1-2 heaped tablespoons of milk powder (either full cream or skim milk powder)

Make up 1 litre by adding 4 heaped tablespoons, keep in the fridge, and use as needed.

Use this milk on cereal, for cooking, in desserts, and wherever else you would usually use milk.

Your dietitian may give you a special recipe for high energy milk

### If your child is lactose intolerant:

- Cheese is still suitable to include as it contains very little lactose
- Low lactose milk (e.g. Zymil, Liddell's) or calcium-fortified soy milk (e.g. So Good) can be used in place of milk
- Some children will still tolerate yoghurt if they are lactose intolerant. There are also low lactose yoghurts available (e.g. Liddell's, Vaalia lactose free)

**A note about carbohydrate supplements (e.g. CarbPlus, Polyjoule): ask your dietitian if these are suitable for your child. Always follow the directions of your dietitian or doctor when using these products.**