

All children need to eat a variety of foods to achieve a balanced diet that is essential for growth and good health. Some children who are not growing well or who have certain medical conditions may need extra calories and protein in their diet.

General advice

- Aim to give 3 meals and 2-3 small snacks daily. Spread the meals and snacks evenly throughout the day.
- Avoid foods labelled as 'low fat' or 'diet'.
- Avoid offering drinks 1 hour before meals as they can reduce their appetite.
- Measure & record your child's weight regularly: once every 2 months is usually recommended.
- Breastfed babies over 6 months should have an over-the-counter children's multivitamin supplement each day which includes vitamin D.

The 5 Food Groups	Do	Best Choices	Top Tips
Milk, cheese, yogurt <i>Give your child breast or formula milk until they are at least 1 year old</i>	Use full fat dairy products or alternatives. <i>The fat content should be: at least 4g per 100g</i>	Cheddar / cream cheese Greek style yogurt, full fat yogurt or fromage frais or thick & creamy yogurts	Add to sauces, omelettes, scrambled eggs, jacket potatoes, mashed potato, vegetables, baked beans etc.
Fats & Oils <i>Fats are the richest source of calories</i>	Avoid low fat spreads Use an oil high in mono-unsaturated fats	Butter or margarine Olive, sunflower, rapeseed or corn oil Full fat mayonnaise Double or whipping creams	Spread generously and add to potatoes/ vegetables Fry or roast foods with added fat Drizzle foods with oil before serving Use cream for puddings, drinks, sauces and soups
Protein rich foods	Aim for 2 portions daily	Meat and meat alternatives (quorn, soya mince etc.) Eggs, pulses (lentils, beans) Salmon and mackerel Ground almonds, peanut butter	Add fat/cook in fat to boost the calorie value. Avoid removing the fat from meat, and avoid 'lean' meats Choose oily fish instead of white fish, and fish tinned in oil rather than brine Add to cereals, yoghurts & desserts
Starchy foods	Include at least one portion at each meal	Cereals, breads, potatoes, pasta, rice	Add a generous serving of butter, cream, margarine or oil
Fruit & vegetables <i>These are low in calories but are an important source of vitamins and minerals</i>	Aim to give <u>upto</u> 5 small portions per day. One portion is about half an adult handful or a tablespoon	Avocados Dried fruit Smoothies and fruit juices Vegetables	Try mashed as a dip or in sandwiches Limit dried fruit /smoothies to one serving a day as they are high in sugar Serve with oil, butter, margarine, cream or cheese to boost the calories

Sugary foods such as biscuits, cakes, sweets & chocolate, ice cream **should be limited** to after meals rather than given as snacks. Choose no added sugar drinks such as milk or water and **avoid** fizzy drinks. Sugar is harmful to your child's teeth — aim to brush their teeth twice a day and visit the dentist regularly.

High Energy Snacks

Small energy dense snacks can be useful to boost nutritional intake but avoid within one hour of meals, as they may reduce your child's appetite:

- Fruit e.g. banana, dried fruit (watch the size to avoid choking risk)
- Mashed avocado and mayonnaise, peanut butter or cream cheese spread on bread/toast or bagel/crumpets
- Cheese pieces
- Yoghurt as above – served plain or with fruit puree