

Getting children to eat enough calories and protein can be a real challenge for parents. Eating well can be especially hard for children who have disabilities. Here are some ideas to help boost calories and protein without giving little tummies too much to handle!

Who are good candidates for increasing calories and protein in their diet?

- Children who have difficulty chewing and swallowing
- “Picky” eaters
- Children who are trying to wean off of tube feeding onto a table food diet
- Children with poor growth
- Children who have frequent illness or infections that increase calorie and protein needs
- Children with extra-high activity levels (Example: a child with an athetoid movement disorder)
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Calorie and Protein Boosters !

Eggs (75 calories and 7 grams of protein per egg)

Add to salads, casseroles, and cooked cereal, serve as egg salad or try scrambled or hard-boiled. (Do not use raw eggs in uncooked items-this poses a large risk for food-borne illness)

Powdered Milk (25 calories and 3 Grams of protein per Tablespoon (Tbsp))

Mix in puddings, casseroles, baby food, soups, ground meats, vegetables. Can also add 1-2 Tbsp to 8 ounces whole milk.

Butter or Margarine (45 calories per Teaspoon (tsp))

Mix in casseroles, baby food, sandwiches, vegetables, cooked cereal, and bread products

Cheeses (approximately 100 calories, 7 grams of protein per ounce)

Try string cheese or sliced cheese as a snack. Sprinkle in baby food, cooked cereal, over potatoes or pasta. Melt in casseroles, vegetables and soups.

Wheat Germ (25 calories, 2 grams of protein per Tbsp) **also a good source of zinc**

Add 1-2 Tbsp to casseroles, cooked cereals, yogurt and cooked items (like muffins or breads.)

Sour Cream (25 calories per Tbsp)

Add to potatoes, casseroles, and use as ingredient for dip for vegetables and crackers

Carnation Instant Breakfast (130 calories, 7 grams of protein per packet)

Add to milk or as part of milkshakes. Can also sprinkle in baked goods (breads, puddings)

Peanut Butter (95 calories, 4 grams of protein per Tbsp)

check with your doctor or feeding specialist before giving to children who have difficulty chewing or swallowing

Add to toast, crackers, pancakes, add to recipes, or spread on fruits like cut up apple or banana

Rice Cereal (15 calories, .3 grams of protein per Tbsp)

Add to baby foods, baby formula and breast milk. Do not recommend more than 1 Tbsp per ounce of formula or breast milk unless prescribed by a physician (becomes very thick)

***** There are also many ready-made liquid nutrition supplements for children. There are also high calorie powders that can be added to foods to increase calorie content (examples of these are Duocal, Moducal and Benecalorie-note these are not “pediatric-specific” and require a doctor’s prescription to use). Your health care team can help you choose the best option for your child*****

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Enhancing the lives of children with disabilities