High calorie foods for underweight children



Your child's pediatrician charts your child's height and weight in order to determine whether he is growing appropriately. Some kids are underweight. These kids use more calories than they take in.

Here are ways to increase calories. Remember, it's not as simple as demanding that your child eat more of her noodles. Instead of trying to stuff more food into your child, increase the caloric umph behind each meal.

Make every bite count:

- Mix baby cereal with breast milk or formula, not juice

or water.

- After weaning from formula or breast milk at a year of age, give whole milk until two years, longer if your pediatrician recommends this. Cow’s milk has more calories than rice, oat, or nut milks.
- Add Carnation Breakfast Essentials to milk.
- Add Smart Balance, butter, or olive oil to cooked vegetables, pasta, rice, and hot cereal.
- Dip fruit into whole milk yogurt
- Dip vegetables into cheese sauce or ranch dressing
- Offer avocado and banana over less caloric fruits such as grapes (which contain only one calorie per grape).
- Cream cheese is full of calories and flavor: smear some on raw veggies, whole wheat crackers, or add some to a jelly sandwich.
- Peanut butter and other nut-butters are great ways to add calories as well as protein to crackers, sandwiches, and cereal.
- If your child is old enough to eat nuts without choking (as least 3 years), a snack of nuts provides more calories and nutrition than crackers.
- For your older child, feed hardy “home style foods.” Give mac ‘n cheese instead of pasta with tomato sauce.
- In general, any form of meat (chicken, fish, or other meat) is more calorically dense than most other foods.
- Mix granola into yogurt.
- Give a hard boiled egg or pieces of cheese as a snack.
- For those who don’t like plain egg, try French toast!
- Give milkshakes in place of milk (no raw eggs!).
- Choose a muffin over a piece of toast.
- Butter their waffles and pancakes before serving.

Have your child’s pediatrician exclude medical reasons of poor weight gain with a thorough history and physical exam before you assume poor weight gain is from low caloric intake.

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