**Help Your Child Gain Weight**

**Things you can do to help your child**

- make meals fun and enjoyable
- offer 3 meals and 2-3 snacks a day
- make serving sizes age appropriate
- allow your child to decide which foods and how much to eat during meals or snacks
- eat together as a family – even if you can only sit down together several times per week
- give your child opportunities to eat with other children
- reduce distractions during mealtime (TV or DVD, loud music, cell phone, etc.)

**Things to avoid**

- don’t allow your child to fill up on fluids, this discourages your child to eat their food
- do not allow more than 16 ounces of milk per day
- do not allow more than 4-6 ounces of juice per day
- do not offer a beverage right before mealtime
- do not make mealtime a battle or force your child to eat
- do not punish a child for not eating

**Tips and Reminders:**

Children may not eat a ‘balanced’ meal every time. Keep track of whether your child is getting a balance of the food groups on a *weekly*, not daily basis.

Your child may go through phases. Favorite foods may phase out and foods that were once refused may become new favorites. Be flexible and continue to offer different foods.

Many children like stronger flavors than you might expect. Don’t be afraid to offer ketchup, BBQ sauce, nacho cheese sauce or salsa for dipping.

**High calorie, high protein snacks and meals**

- cheese
- pudding made with milk
- crackers with peanut butter or other nut butters (almond, cashew);
  - do not give peanut or other nut butters to children under 2
- bagel with cream cheese
- spreadable cheese on crackers or bread
- yogurt with added powdered milk
- ice cream
- hummus on crackers or pita bread
- tortilla chips and guacamole
- quesadilla with cheese and chicken, dipped in sour cream
- add margarine and milk to mashed potatoes
- loaded baked potato with margarine, sour cream, chili, cheese
- pasta with: pesto, Alfredo sauce, or margarine and cheese
- vegetables with cheese sauce and margarine or oil

**High calorie, high protein beverages**

- milk with added instant breakfast powder or powdered milk
- milkshake made with ice cream
- fruit smoothies made with ice cream and/or milk

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