

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.
- For breastfed babies over 6 months, give them an over the counter children's multivitamin supplement each day which includes vitamin D.

The 5 Food Groups	Do	Best choices	Top tips
<b>Milk, cheese, yogurt</b> Give your child breast or formula milk until they are at least 1 year old.	Use full fat dairy products or alternatives (the fat content should be <b>at least 4grams / 100grams</b> )	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.
<b>Fats &amp; Oils</b> Fats are the richest source of calories	Avoid low fats 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
<b>Protein rich foods</b>	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 their calorie value Avoid removing the fat from meat, and avoid 'lean' meats  Choose oily fish instead of white fish, fish tinned in oil rather than brine  Add to cereals, yoghurts & desserts
<b>Starchy foods</b>	Include at least one portion at each meal	Cereals, breads, potatoes, pasta, rice	Add a generous serving of butter, cream, margarine or oil
<b>Fruit &amp; vegetables</b> These are low in calories but are an important source of vitamins and minerals	Aim to give <u>up to 5</u> 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 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.

### Between-meal snack ideas

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

- Banana, Dried fruit (watch the size to avoid choking risk)
- Mashed avocado +mayonnaise, peanut butter or cream cheese on bread/toast (or bagel/ crumpets)
- Cheese pieces
- Greek style Yogurt, plain or with fruit puree