

FACTSHEET

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High Energy Eating for Infants 6-12 months - Tips for gaining weight

This information is for infants who have difficulty gaining weight. If you are concerned about your child's growth you should speak to your GP, Paediatrician or Early Childhood Nurse. A dietitian can provide advice on feeding your child.

This information, with its food examples, is intended for educational purposes only and does not constitute SCHN/JHCH endorsement of any particular branded food product.

Some infants need added protein and energy to assist with their weight gain and growth. One of the simplest ways to do this is to increase energy and protein in the foods they eat.

The table below provides some suggestions for increasing the energy and protein content of your child's diet:

Food/fluid	Uses to boost energy and protein
Breast milk/formula = energy & protein	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Your dietitian may give you a special recipe for adding calories to feeds
Oil = high energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Use for frying meatsPuree into vegetables or mix into commercial baby foodsAdd into iron fortified baby rice cerealDrizzle over the top of rice, noodles, pasta and vegetables
Margarine = high energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">As above with oil; plusSpread thickly on sandwiches, toast, crackers and biscuits
Meat and alternatives = high protein	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Fry with oil or add oil to pureed meatsExamples include beef, chicken, lamb, pork and fish.Try making meatballs or patties using beef mince, chicken mince or cooked fish.Baked beans, lentils and legumes are meat alternatives. To boost the energy content add margarine, grated cheese or oil.
Avocado = high energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Use as a spread on sandwiches and crackersMash with sour cream and use as a dip with vegetables or crackers.
Egg	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Can be used as a binder in foods such as meatballs.

= high protein	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use to dip toast “soldiers” into egg yolk • Make high energy scrambled eggs using cream, cheese, oil. Add ham or bacon if desired.
Dairy products = high protein	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full fat dairy products are recommended for children under the age of 2 years. • Examples include milk, yoghurt, cheese, cream cheese, custard, ice cream, sour cream. • Include dairy-based snacks regularly through the day e.g. yoghurt/custard with mashed banana/fruit pieces to dip, use cream cheese as a dip or spread on crackers/sandwiches, cheese cubes or cheese sticks
Cheese = high protein	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grate into pureed vegetables, pasta, rice, bolognaise sauce, casseroles • Melt into baked beans or tinned spaghetti on toast
Cream = high energy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add to fruit or vegetable purees, or mashed potato • Add to soups or casseroles • Mix into cereals e.g. Weetbix, porridge
Nut spreads = high protein, high energy	<p>** Note whole nuts are a choking hazard for children under 3 years **</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use smooth peanut butter or other nut spreads on sandwiches, toast, biscuits, crackers • Use hommus as a spread or dip

Note about carbohydrate supplements (e.g. CarbPlus, Polyjoule): ask your dietitian if these are suitable for your child. Always follow the directions of your dietitian or doctor when using these products.

How much to use?

The following is a guide only. Please discuss with a dietitian if you are unsure if a booster is suitable for your child.

	Foods	Energy/Protein Boosters
Puree foods	2 Tbs puree/mashed vegetables	1 tsp margarine/oil
Soft foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ½ cup baked bean/spaghetti ½ cup cereal ½ cup cooked noodles/pasta ½ cup cooked rice and vegetables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-2 Tbs grated cheese 2 Tbs cream 1 Tbs margarine/oil 1 Tbs margarine/oil
Finger foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cooked vegetable pieces Sandwich Meat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dip in cream cheese/ avocado/ hommus/natural yoghurt/sour cream or melt cheese over the top Use thickly spread margarine and add cheese/ avocado/ nut spread Cook in oil and add extra cheese/ creamy sauce/ crumb coating

Recipe Ideas

High energy mash – mash potato/pumpkin/sweet potato with cream, butter, sour cream and melt cheese over the top

Risotto - toss rice in oil, then slowly add water / stock / milk, stirring constantly until rice is soft. Add chicken, peas, cream and sliced mushrooms. Mix in additional oil/margarine/butter before serving.

Fruit Crumble - rub 1 tablespoon of margarine/butter in with ½ cup flour and sprinkle on top of stewed fruit. Oven bake until golden on top. Serve with cream or ice-cream.

Creamy Rice Pudding - simmer rice in milk, stirring constantly, until soft. Add sugar & coconut cream to taste.

Pastry Cheese Straws - sprinkle grated cheese on a sheet of puff pastry. Cut into strips, twist and bake in hot oven until golden.

Mini Meatballs – Mix mince (beef/lamb/pork or chicken) with a beaten egg to hold it together – roll into little balls & fry in oil until browned. Transfer to baking dish, cover with sauce (if applicable) and bake till cooked through. Ideas include:

- Chicken mince with mashed sweet potato.
- Pork mince with grated apple
- Lamb mince with grated cheese
- Beef mince with grated zucchini, carrot & tomato based pasta sauce.

Crumbed chicken – Lightly beat 1 egg and 2tbs cream, dip chicken pieces into this mixture, then coat in bread crumbs. Fry in olive oil until golden brown.

Couscous - soak couscous grains in boiling water. Add grated cheese and margarine/butter. Serve with chicken, meat or fish and vegetables. Another idea is to try mashing pumpkin through the couscous to help it stick together. Form into little balls which toddlers can then feed to themselves.