

Dietetics

Paediatrics - How to gain weight in babies



This advice sheet is for parents and carers of infants below 12 months of age, who are failing to thrive. This should be given with advice from a dietitian, paediatric doctor or paediatric nurse. Once the child has gained weight this advice should no longer be followed. Monitoring of an infant's weight and growth is important.

Babies may not gain weight adequately if they have a:

- poor intake of breast milk or infant formula
- poor intake of solids
- larger energy need due to their medical condition

This leaflet contains simple advice on ways to increase the energy content of your baby's diet.

If your baby has not thrived well since their early months of life they may have already been started on a high energy infant formula by their dietitian or doctor.

In addition, now your baby is on solids, the following suggestions will help your baby to gain more weight.



Patient Information

If you would like general advice on introducing solids and advice on foods to be avoided please see our '**Starting your baby on Solid Food**' advice sheet which can be downloaded from our trust website.

If weaning from 17 weeks to 6 months

Make weaning solids with expressed breast milk or infant formula rather than water.

Solids will need to be thin purees from 17 weeks moving to thicker purees by 20 weeks.

Good starting foods are:

- Baby rice
- Baby cereals
- Pureed fruits - e.g. banana/ avocado/ peach/ plums/ mango
- Pureed vegetables- e.g. potato, sweet potato, parsnip, swede, carrots, broccoli

Weaning from 6 months

Most foods can now be included in the diet. Move from thicker purees to mashed diet.

Have 1-2 main meals daily consisting of:

Protein such as pureed meat, poultry, fish, grated or soft cheese, eggs, beans or lentils

Starchy food such as mashed potato, rice, pasta, couscous, bread or chapatti **Vegetables**

Tips on increasing the calories/energy in your baby's diet

1. Use foods naturally higher in energy at mealtimes alongside other foods

- **Vegetables** - starchy vegetables- parsnip, swede, carrots, pumpkins, squash.
- **Fruits** - Avocado, banana, mango, papaya
- **Protein foods** – meats, chicken, fish, beans, pulses, nut butters, cheese

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- **Starchy foods** - potato, sweet potato, yams, pasta, noodles, rice, breads
- **Dairy foods** - full fat milk in foods (or high energy formula if have on prescription), yoghurt, cheese, cream cheese, cream

2. **Add double cream to:**

- Puréed fruit/ fruit pouches
- Mashed potatoes
- Sauces for pasta meals
- Soups
- Milk puddings

3. **Add 1 tbsp margarine/butter/oil to:**

- Mashed/puree vegetables
- Stews, soups, dhal
- Savoury food pouches/ jars (if using already)

4. **Add creamed coconut (1 teaspoon) into**

- Mashed sweet potato
- Mashed banana, mango, peach
- Mashed potatoes and peas

5. **Try to give one milky pudding a day**

- Custard
- Full fat yoghurt, Greek yoghurt, fromage frais
- Milk puddings-rice, semolina, tapioca pudding
- Blancmange
- Egg custard, Crème caramel

6. **Add grated cheese to**

- Pasta meals
- Baked beans
- Mashed potato

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- Scrambled eggs

7. Offer cereals / rusks mashed with milk as a bedtime snack if your baby is willing

8. Try to make home-cooked foods as much as possible, as these are more nourishing (avoiding spices/salt) however if using commercial weaning jars/pouches read the labels and chose those which are higher in calories

9. Try to maintain a minimal milk intake of 600mls (20fl oz) breast milk or infant formula per day in addition to solids.

From 8 - 12 months

Continue with the previous advice but in addition **try finger foods.**

Babies always eat and enjoy food more if they are allowed to feed themselves and make a mess. Never leave your baby alone with finger foods as there can be a risk of choking

Good finger foods for weight gain at mealtimes are:

- Fish fingers, fish cakes (fried)
- Chicken nuggets, chicken fingers
- Sausages, sausage rolls, hot dog sausages
- Cheese, cheese spread triangles, cheese on toast
- Eggy bread (dip bread in beaten egg & fry), omelettes
- Chips, Alphabites, Smiley faces, potato waffles, potato wedges
- Sandwiches or toast - thickly spread with butter or margarine, and nut butters /cheese spread
- Sweet potato wedges
- Pizza fingers
- Slices of avocado

Where possible try to choose the varieties with the lowest salt content.

Patient Information

Good finger foods for weight gain between meals but not to be offered every day:-

- Toast/brioche thickly spread with butter or margarine and jam/nut butters or cheese spread
- Corn puff crisps, vegetable puffs, fruit puffs, rice cakes
- Biscuits
- Savoury biscuits or crackers with butter or margarine and cheese spread
- Chocolate
- Cakes and pastries
- Ice cream cones

Dental Hygiene

Remember that eating sugary foods between meals can be harmful for teeth. If your baby has teeth, you should **brush them twice daily** with a small soft toothbrush and water. If your baby is following the gaining weight advice for a long period it would be advisable to begin regular **dental checks** and tell the dentist that your baby is on a high calorie diet.

Produced by Coventry Dietitians,

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Contact number: 024 7696 6161

Trust website: www.uhcw.nhs.uk

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To give feedback on this leaflet please email feedback@uhcw.nhs.uk

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