

High energy diets for infants

when receiving treatment for cancer

There may be several reasons why your child needs a high energy diet while on treatment:

- Your child's condition or the treatment they are on requires a higher energy intake than other infants their age.
- They have or had a poor appetite.
- They have problems with slow growth or weight loss due to side effects of treatment.
- Your baby may need to gain or 'catch up' adequate weight.

Eating a balanced diet, including foods from all of the major food groups, is important in the first year of life to provide energy and nutrients such as protein, essential fats, vitamins, and minerals. However, some of the solids offered during baby's first year are low in energy.

Below are some suggestions to increase the energy content of some solids from each food group.

Increasing the energy content of food and drink

Breads and cereals

Make up cereal (suitable for age) with your baby's formula or breast milk instead of water, e.g. iron-fortified rice cereal, Vitabrits, or Weetbix, mixed with formula.

For older infants, options can include: soft bread or plain biscuits with a generous spread of butter or avocado; cooked noodles, pasta, or rice with melted butter, cheese, or a creamy sauce.

Meat

Butter and gravy can be added to chicken, meat, egg, or fish.

Fruit

Offer a variety of fresh or tinned fruits. Use mashed fruits for younger infants and if developmentally ready, chopped fruit for older infants. Cream, yoghurt, or custard can also be added.

Avocado is high in energy and can be spread thickly onto soft bread or served mashed on a spoon.

Vegetables

Add oil, or melt butter over mashed or whole cooked pieces of vegetable. Also try melting grated cheese over the top, or serving vegetables with a creamy cheese sauce. Make puréed vegetable soups with grated cheese and milk rather than water.

Dairy

Full fat dairy products should be used. Yoghurt, custard, or milk puddings (made with your baby's formula or cow's milk) can be served alone or with fruit. A little cream can also be added. Add full cream milk powder to milk to use for drinks and in cooking. Your Dietitian can give you a specific recipe.

Continue to offer your child breast milk or infant formula until at least 12 months of age. Ask your Dietitian about ways you can increase the energy content of breast milk or infant formula.

If you are using tins or jars of baby food, add butter or oil to savoury products such as meat, cereals, and vegetables. Add cream to sweet products such as fruit or yoghurt.



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