

High calorie, high protein diet for babies

Why do some babies have trouble gaining weight?

Your baby may have trouble gaining weight if they:

- Do not take in enough calories.
- Lose calories from malabsorption.
- Use up a lot of calories due to sickness or infection.
- Have certain health problems, such as lung or heart problems.

If your baby had surgery, they need extra calories to heal and to gain weight and grow.

How can I help my baby gain more weight?

Offer high calorie breast milk or formula

- Your baby's nutritionist or doctor may give you a recipe for how to make breast milk mixed with formula or high calorie formula.
- It is important that you make the formula exactly as your nutritionist or doctor tells you. A mistake in mixing the formula may make your baby very sick.

Avoid giving "fillers"

- "Fillers" are drinks like juice, Powerade, Gatorade, water, punch or tea.
- They will fill up your baby but will not help them gain weight. Do not give your baby these drinks.

Wait to start solids until your baby is about 6 months old

- Before 6 months of age, your baby may need to drink breast milk or formula 6 to 10 times each day.
- Offer strained foods at 6 months of age.
 - To do this, offer your breast or bottle first. Then, offer baby food.
 - Do this 1 to 3 times each day.
 - Your baby should still drink breast milk or formula 5 to 6 times each day.
- To lower the risk of cavities in your baby's teeth:
 - Do not let them go to sleep with a bottle at nap or nighttime.
 - Do not let them carry around a bottle or cup during the day.
 - Avoid giving sticky, sweet foods. This includes dried fruit.

What foods should I offer my baby?

Read labels on baby foods. Choose and offer foods with the highest number of calories to help your baby gain weight. Some choices are listed on page 2.

In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.

High calorie, high protein diet for babies, continued

Higher calorie stage 2 foods – try to feed your baby these	
Bananas	100 calories in 4 ounce (oz) package
Peaches	70 calories in 4 oz package
Sweet potatoes	75 calories in 4 oz package
Plain meats	70 to 100 calories in 2.5 oz jar
Bananas	100 calories in 4 ounce (oz) package

Lower calorie foods – try to limit these <u>or</u> add extra calories to them (such a butter)	
Applesauce	60 calories in 4 ounce (oz) package
Green beans	35 calories in 4 oz package
Carrots	40 calories in 4 oz package
Squash	40 calories in 4 oz package

How can I add calories to foods my baby eats?

You can add calories to your baby’s food by adding fats and protein. Some tips are listed below.

Fats

- Add margarine, butter or vegetable oil to your baby’s cereal, meats and cooked vegetables. This can add as much as 45 calories per teaspoon (tsp).
- Do not add more than 1 teaspoon per every ¼ cup of food (4 oz jar or 3.5 oz package of baby food).
- Add mashed or pureed avocado.

Protein

- Put sliced cheese on bread.
- Sprinkle grated cheese on baby cereal or potatoes.
- Use high calorie formula to make baby cereal, cream soups and potatoes.
- Offer plain strained meats instead of meat dinners. These “dinners“ have a lot of starchy fillers and do not have as much protein as plain meats. To improve the taste of strained meats, mix them with vegetables just before giving them to your baby.

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High calorie, high protein diet for babies, continued

Are there any foods I should not add to my baby's food?

- Do not add corn syrup or honey to your baby's formula or food. This can cause botulism, which can make your baby very sick.
- Do not add plain sugar to your baby's food. This may cause diarrhea (loose stools).
- Do not add foods that may cause choking. This includes popcorn, peanuts, whole grapes, raisins, hot dog pieces, hard fresh and dried fruits and vegetables, and hard and sticky candy.

How much weight should my baby gain?

A baby should gain a lot of weight in the first 3 to 4 months of life. Then, weight gain slows down. Boys will gain more weight than girls.

Your baby should gain _____ ounces (oz) each week, or _____ each month.

Who should I call if I have questions?

Call your baby's doctor or nutritionist if you have questions about your baby's high calorie, high protein diet.

This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.

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