

Suggestions for Reducing Weight in Patients with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)



Background Information

Some children with ADHD have trouble regulating their eating. The impulsive nature of ADHD and the difficulty with self-regulating means that they will often eat when they see/hear/think about food and when they are bored (which can be often!).

Suggestions to aid weight loss:

Below and on page 2 are some suggestions to help your child reduce their calorie intake and to help them maintain appropriate growth rate and weight for their height. Top ten tips:-

1. Try to have regular meal times and snack times each day and try to eat as a family as often as possible. Try to keep the child occupied so that they do not turn to food and drink, or distract them when they do.
2. Meals should be based on starchy foods – these are foods such as bread, potatoes, rice, chapattis, noodles and breakfast cereals. But look at portion sizes! Is your child eating the same size portions as an adult? Use smaller plates – you will be less tempted to overfill them.
3. Avoid having snacks such as crisps, biscuits, sweets etc. available (don't buy them or lock them away).
4. Keep the cupboard stocked with lower fat and sugar products – you will still need to restrict how many can be eaten each day.
5. Avoid using food/sweets as rewards – indeed reward them for sticking to main meals and avoiding snacks!
6. Make sure they eat a healthy breakfast with foods which will keep them feeling full for longer e.g. porridge, wheat cereals, cooked breakfast. (It is known that if you skip breakfast or have high sugar meals, you crave more sugary foods later in the day). Try to avoid adding sugar/honey etc. to porridge and cereals. Try fruit instead and use skimmed milk.

7. Drinking with/before your meals will make you feel fuller more quickly and therefore reduce your food intake, ensure a sugar free/diet drink is available. Try water, no added sugar squash/flavoured water. Remember fizzy pop and fruit juices (even diluted) are high in sugar.
8. Eat lots of fruit and vegetables. Apart from being good for you they fill you up.
9. Avoid puddings. If they have a snack later on you could save a low fat/sugar snack such as yoghurt or fruit instead.
10. If you are being nagged, remember to use “when and then” rather than saying no outright – e.g. “when you have had your tea then you can have a biscuit if you are still hungry” or “you can have a biscuit for supper”.



If you feel your child's decisions regarding food choices make any of these suggestions difficult, let us know. It may be possible to refer to a dietician for more specific advice.

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This information is available in audio, Braille, large print and other languages. To request a copy, please telephone 01270 278291.

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