

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



Background information

Patients with ADHD often have weight problems. If they are very hyperactive they may burn off large amounts of energy and struggle to complete meals. Even if they eat fairly well, they can be quite slim for their height.

Stimulation medication may also reduce their appetite.

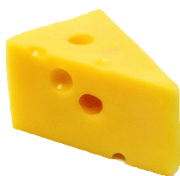
Suggestion to aid weight gain:

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

1. It is important to offer small frequent meals and snacks, e.g. three meals and three nutritious snacks each day, try to eat together and make meals colourful and interesting.
2. Always offer two courses at each mealtime, one savoury followed by a sweet course.
3. If your child is only able to manage small amounts at mealtimes make sure the foods are as high in calories as possible.
4. Offer more foods high in fat and sugar and ensure all foods are full fat varieties rather than 'low fat' or 'diet', use full fat yoghurts.
5. Try to include nutritious milky drinks such as shakes, hot chocolate, milky coffee or full fat milk. (Avoid drinks containing caffeine in the evening).
6. Add extra calories to meals/snacks – e.g. grated cheese on pasta, baked beans or spaghetti, baked potatoes and soup. Add butter and milk/cream to mashed potatoes, add butter/margarine to vegetables. Add jam/honey to yoghurts/rice pudding.

7. Allow foods such as chips/roast potatoes/crisps more often.
8. Beware the child who likes their fruit and veg too much. They may need to take in more starchy food as well. A sandwich/cereal/scone may be a better snack than an apple for them!
9. Avoid drinking with/before meals. If the stomach is full you will eat less.
10. Try not to make a fuss if your child does not eat and never force your child to eat as both of these can make things worse.

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.



Community Paediatrics Department

Leighton Hospital
Middlewich Road
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 4QJ

Telephone: 01270 278291 (Crewe)

01606 542536 (Winsford)

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

Reprinted February 2021 Review February 2024 Ref: WC/CP/0190221