

Eating Tips for Children Taking Stimulant Medicines

Medicines known as “stimulants” used to treat ADHD may cause a decreased appetite in some children. It is important that your child eats enough healthy calories to promote growth and prevent unwanted weight loss.

Plan to Eat Right

Create a plan to make sure your child gets the calories needed during the day. If possible, let your child help plan meals so they will be willing to eat better. Try to feed your child larger meals in the morning (before the ADHD medications begin to work), in the late afternoon or early evening (when the medications begin to wear off), and in the late evening before bed.

Here are a few ideas to help you prepare.

Pump up breakfast

Serve before giving medicines. Choose healthy and high calorie breakfast items:

- Whole grain and granola cereal with whole milk – add dried fruit and nuts to increase calories
- Toast, bagels or English muffins with butter, margarine, or peanut butter to increase calories and protein
- Eggs with cheese or avocado
- Whole grain waffles with turkey sausage links
- Carnation Breakfast Essentials® mixed with whole milk and frozen yogurt or ice cream for a breakfast shake; add fruit for a fruit smoothie
- Dinner for breakfast – leftovers from dinner, cold pizza or even a turkey or ham sandwich with cheese can provide nutritious calories



Look for lunch opportunities

Lunch time may be hard for your child because he is not hungry. Work with him to find a food or drink he is willing to try instead of throwing his lunch away or giving it to the kids at his lunch table. You can try:

- Granola bars with dried fruit and nuts
- A supplement such as Pediasure®, Boost® or Carnation Breakfast Essentials®
- Pudding, yogurt tube/cup, small bag of dried fruit or nuts
- Have your child drink water during the school day to prevent dehydration

Eating Tips for Children Taking Stimulant Medicines *continued...*

After school

This may be when your child is finally getting hungry – take advantage of a good appetite.

- Serve dinner early if you can. If you can have dinner ready when your child comes home from school this may be the best time to get them to eat.
- Serve a late lunch – instead of chips or cookies, have a turkey and cheese sandwich with a glass of milk and piece of fruit for a snack instead.
- A high calorie snack can add a lot of necessary nutrients – yogurt covered raisins, yogurt mixed with granola and dried fruit, an apple or banana with peanut butter.

Dinner time

If your child did not eat much after school he may really be ready to eat now. Encourage your child to sit with the family and enjoy a healthy meal.

- Let your child help create the menu – kids love to help make decisions
- Adding healthy fats to a meal will increase the calories. Cook with canola or olive oil to increase healthy calories
- Offer dessert. Children on stimulants can usually benefit from the extra calories provided by dessert

Night time snacks

Offer your child a healthy snack before bed to top off the day's calories.

- Snack crackers with peanut butter
- Small bowl of ice cream or frozen yogurt
- Cereal with milk
- String cheese with fruit
- Yogurt with granola
- Trail mix or a handful of nuts
- Milkshake made with ice cream, milk and fruit
- Avocado Toast



Dietitian/Diet Technician: _____

Phone #: _____