

BOOSTING CALORIES AND NUTRITION

When ADHD Meds Reduce Appetite



It can be difficult to get a child to eat enough when they are taking medications for ADHD. These medications commonly suppress appetite. The

following suggestions can help offset this issue to ensure that your child is getting the nutrition needed to grow to their full potential.

KEY POINTS



1. Make the most of breakfast!



2. Keep a structured schedule.



3. Focus on nutrient dense beverages.



4. A bedtime snack is a must.

Make the Most of Breakfast!

Plan for and allow enough time EVERY DAY for a wholesome breakfast including a cup of milk (2% or whole) and calorie-dense foods. This meal is key to help offset calories not consumed later in the day due to lack of appetite caused by ADHD meds. Try to include at least 2-3 food groups.

Here are some breakfast ideas:

- Egg sandwich with cheese on biscuit, croissant, bagel
- Toast with peanut butter and jelly or nutella
- French toast, pancakes or waffles with butter and syrup

- Homemade quick bread or muffin – healthier options include fruit, vegetable and nut ingredients, such as banana, blueberry, dried fruit, pumpkin, zucchini, walnuts, almonds, etc.
- A bowl of granola or other dense cereal plus walnuts and fruit topped with yogurt or milk

No time for breakfast?

Use Carnation Essentials mixed with 2% or whole milk and take a baggie of dry cereal, nuts/seeds and dried fruit. If traditional breakfast foods are not working, try non-breakfast foods, such as a favorite sandwich, grilled cheese, leftover pizza or leftover dinner foods.

Keep a Structured Schedule

When appetite is lacking it is easy to skip meals. Aim for 3 meals and 2-3 snacks each day to help avoid long stretches without eating. Alternatively, if meals aren't working be flexible and try 5-6 mini meals.

- For snacks, or mini-meals, aim for at least 2-3 food groups, such as peanut butter (protein) with crackers (grain), tortillas (grain) with melted cheese (dairy) and salsa (vegetable), bowl of cereal (grain) with milk (dairy), etc.
- Offer lunch-type foods after school instead of snack items, especially if only a small amount is eaten at lunch.
- Take advantage of improving appetite at dinner and plan a family dinner with at least 4 food groups, including **protein** (meat, chicken, fish, or legumes), **vegetables** and **grain/starch** (pasta, rice, potato), **healthy fats** or oil and a cup of **milk**.

Focus on Nutrient Dense Beverages



Aim for whole or 2% milk

A consistent intake of nutrient dense beverages can make a big nutritional difference. Dry mouth can be a side effect of ADHD medication, so frequent intake of fluids may be easier than eating foods.

- Aim for 3-4 cups of 2% or whole milk EVERY DAY.
- Try a homemade milkshake, smoothie, Boost Plus or Carnation Essentials – often the best time to add this is when foods wouldn't otherwise be eaten.

A Bedtime Snack is a Must

Improved appetite often returns in the evening, so planning for a balanced bedtime snack, or mini-meal, is a great way to boost intake.

If dinner was skipped, try for a favorite meal item. Otherwise, a high calorie snack such as peanut butter or cheese on toast or crackers, nuts, seeds, dried fruit, tortillas with guacamole, ice cream, or any favorite wholesome snack will work.

