Caring for Your Child
CALORIE BOOSTERS

One way to improve your child’s weight gain is to increase the calories in his food. While you cannot force your child to eat more, you can offer your child a variety of higher calorie food choices. Listed below are some ideas for boosting your child’s calorie intake.

Dairy Products

- Milk is an excellent source of protein, calcium, and vitamin D. Be sure to offer whole milk, with 4% fat.
- Whole milk yogurt contains protein, calcium, and good bacteria to promote bowel function.
- Non-fat, powdered milk contains 30 calories, 3 grams of protein, and 100 mg of calcium per tablespoon. Powdered milk can be added to milkshakes, mashed potatoes, hot cereal, macaroni and cheese, or gravy.
- Heavy cream or whipping cream can add up to 50 calories per tablespoon. Heavy cream can be used to substitute 1/3 of the milk in recipes. It can also be added to foods such as scrambled eggs, pancakes, macaroni and cheese, mashed potatoes, pudding, and cream-style soups.
- Try cream cheese instead of butter or use it as a dip for crackers, spread on bread with jelly, or on muffins. Cream cheese provides 35 calories per tablespoon.
- Add cheese to foods like scrambled eggs, baked or mashed potatoes, casseroles, cooked vegetables, rice, pasta, meat and fish. One slice of cheese provides about 100 calories, 7 grams of protein, and 150 mg of calcium.

Meat/Meat Alternative

- Top crackers with cheese or peanut butter to increase calories and protein intake
- Spread peanut butter on crackers, toast, muffins, or waffles for a high calorie, high protein snack. One tablespoon of peanut butter provides 100 calories and 4 grams of protein.
- Try breaded fish or fish sticks.
- Offer beans as a snack, as a side dish at mealtimes, in salads or in soups. Kidney beans, garbanzo beans, and edamame beans are foods that kids can enjoy eating with their hands. Beans such as lentils, kidney beans, and garbanzo beans provide 100 calories, 6 grams of protein and 6 grams of fiber per ½ cup.

Fruits and Vegetables

- Most fruits and vegetables are low in fat and calories; however, they are an excellent source of vitamins, minerals, fiber, and antioxidants.
- Continue to offer fruits and vegetables at meals and snack time.
- Try offering fruits and vegetables with dips such as salad dressing, cream cheese, melted chocolate, peanut butter, or topped with melted cheese.
Creamed corn, spinach, or peas are higher in calories.

- Drizzle canola, olive oil, or vegetable oil on top of cooked vegetables to increase calories. Most oils provide about 35-40 calories per teaspoon.

Avocados and coconuts are higher calorie fruits. Try mashing an avocado and using as a dip for tortillas or mini pita pockets. Try incorporating coconut into bread, muffin, cakes, cookies, smoothie recipes.

- Dried fruits such as raisins, dried cherries, cranberries, banana chips, apricots, and prunes are a convenient, high calorie snack food. Try incorporating dried fruits into cereals, muffin or bread mixes, or yogurt to increase calories. One half cup of dried fruit provides about 100 calories.

- Fruits canned in heavy syrup provide 100 calories per 4 oz. compared to 50 calories per 4 oz for fruits canned in its own juice.

**Grains**

- Top pancakes, french toast, waffles with butter, syrup, fruit, jam/preserves, or powdered sugar.
- Top muffins, toast, sweet breads with cream cheese, peanut butter, jam.
- Mix raisins, brown sugar, milk or heavy cream into cooked cereals.
- Sprinkle cold cereal with wheat germ, granola, dried or fresh fruit.
- Use dried potato flakes to thicken soups and gravies.
- Prepare potatoes, cream soups, macaroni and cheese, noodles with butter, milk or heavy cream.

**Fats**

- Oils such as corn, vegetable, peanut, olive, and canola can be drizzled on top of cooked vegetables or pasta to add 35-40 calories per teaspoon.
- Try drizzling oil over chicken nuggets, french fries, sweet potato fries, pierogies to increase calories.
- Add butter or sour cream to baked potatoes.

These foods are examples of choking hazards:

Gum, hard candies, popcorn, whole grapes, whole cherry tomatoes, raisins, whole or circle cuts of hot dogs, nuts, whole or circle cuts of raw carrots, chips.

You should never give these to small children.

If you choose to give your baby peanut butter or a peanut-butter like spread, use just a thin layer. Children younger than elementary school age should never eat any peanut butter type products from a spoon or a finger. They may have trouble swallowing it.