

HOW TO BOOST CALORIES FOR BABIES

If you think your baby is too small and needs more calories, the first step would be to check with your doctor and have a look at the growth charts. Being low on a growth chart is not an automatic indication of a problem. Some babies are just tiny but if they grow predictably and stay on the same growth curve, they are growing into bodies that are right for them! [More on growth charts here.](#)

If the doctor shares your concern and thinks you need to focus on serving more high-calorie foods to your baby, check the list below. Just a few changes to a daily menu may be enough to boost the energy intake.

In general, babies need a good amount of fat in their diet. Fat, including saturated fat, should not be restricted in kids under 2 years of age. Did you know that half of all the calories in breastmilk and formula come from fat?

For babies under 9-10 months, breastmilk and formula will still be the biggest source of calories and fat in the diet. So ensuring they get enough is very important. Babies need a lot of those nutritious drinks to grow and develop properly. Their requirements go down from 32oz (950ml) a day at 6 months, to 24oz (700ml) a day by 12 months.

Because getting enough breastmilk or formula is so important at the early stages of starting solids, this will probably be the first thing your doctor will look at if growth becomes a problem. If your baby is getting enough nutrition from liquids, your doctor may recommend modifying the solids to add more calories.

It's not uncommon to see families mostly offering fruit and vegetable as finger foods when starting solids. And while fruit and vegetables are very nutritious, babies also need to start building a good repertoire of iron rich options and eat plenty of calorie rich foods. Check the [Nutrition for Babies module](#), included in this class, for the easy formula to help you build balanced meals.

for your baby, using both purees and finger foods. On top of that, you can be more strategic with purees, using them as calories boosters while letting your baby play and learn with finger foods.

Note: you still need to stay responsive and never make your baby eat more than what they want to eat. It is very easy to slip into the pressure style of feeding when you feel that your baby's growth is a problem. Remember that if your baby feels the pressure, she will most likely start eating less, not more.

Calorie rich options for babies (finger foods and purees)

Food	Serving suggestions
<p>Fats: olive oil, avocado oil, sunflower oil, walnut oil, coconut oil, butter, ghee, lard.</p>	<p>Add to purees or mashed food, porridge, pasta or other grain dishes. Use for roasting and sautéing vegetables and fruit (sweet potatoes, carrots, apples, pears). Use as a dip for toast sticks or add extra vegetable oil to the dip that your baby likes, like pesto or hummus.</p>
<p>Nuts and seeds products and alternatives: very finely ground nuts and seeds, tahini, almond butter, peanut butter, sunflower seed butter, pumpkin seed butter, walnut butter, cashew butter, WOW butter (made from soya beans)</p>	<p>Mix nut and seed butters or powders into purees, mashed food, porridge, smoothies or yogurt. Spread nut and seed butters on a toast. Thin nut and seed butters with yogurt and use as a dip for dipping fruit or vegetables slices or toast sticks. Substitute half of the flour in baked goods with ground almond flour.</p>

<p>Grains: rice, bread, pasta, quinoa, couscous, bulgur wheat, corn meal (polenta), millet, oatmeal</p>	<p>Use rice, small shapes of pasta, quinoa, couscous, bulgur wheat, corn meal (polenta) or millet to “bulk up” stews and fruit/vegetable mashed food/purees. Add butter, cream or oil to boost calories.</p> <p>Serve pasta, rice, quinoa, bulgur wheat, corn meal (polenta) or millet with pesto, olive oil or butter and some grated cheese on top.</p> <p>Cook polenta, pour it into a baking tray lined with parchment paper, let it cool, slice it into sticks and fry in coconut oil, olive oil or butter.</p> <p>Serve polenta like porridge, with plenty of coconut oil, avocado oil or butter.</p> <p>Prepare porridge with whole milk, cream and butter.</p> <p>Serve bread or bagels with butter, cream cheese or mashed avocado. You may need to toast bread or bagels first if they are very soft.</p>
<p>Starchy vegetables: potatoes, sweet potatoes, carrots, peas, parsnip, pumpkin, squash</p>	<p>Serve as a mash with plenty of oil or butter, half and half or cream.</p> <p>Cut vegetables into sticks and roast with a generous amount of coconut oil or olive oil.</p> <p>Serve with hummus, sour cream or pesto as a dip.</p>
<p>Fruit: banana, avocado, dates, prunes, dried apricots, raisins, dried figs</p>	<p>Cut a banana into slices and sauté in butter or coconut oil. Serve as a finger food or mash to feed with a spoon.</p> <p>Make pancakes with a mashed banana, one beaten egg and a couple of tablespoons of ground nuts, any baby cereal or any flour. Fry the pancakes in a couple of tablespoons of butter or coconut oil. Serve with soured cream or double cream for dipping.</p> <p>Cut an avocado in wedges, roll them in ground flaxseeds, chia seeds or ground coconut and serve as a finger food.</p> <p>Mash avocado and spread it on a toast.</p> <p>Blend avocado into smoothies.</p> <p>Soak dry fruit like raisins, dates, dried apricots and dried figs in warm water until very soft, drain most of the water and blend them in a puree. Serve as a topping for oatmeal, mix into yogurt, mix with soured cream or double cream.</p>

Dairy: full fat milk, cream, half and half, cheese (including soft cheeses like ricotta, cream cheese, cottage cheese and mozzarella), full fat soured cream, full fat yogurt

Dairy alternatives: soya or coconut yogurt, coconut cream, coconut milk, dairy free cheese.

Protein-rich foods: high fat cuts of meat and poultry (brisket, ribs, chicken thigh, turkey thigh, non-lean minced beef, ground bison,) oily fish (salmon, mackerel, tuna), eggs, tofu, beans and lentils.

Spread cream cheese, full fat ricotta or dairy free soft cheese alternative on a toast or bagel.

Serve cheddar, mozzarella or cheese alternatives as a finger food, cut into sticks or shredded.

Mix yogurt, cottage cheese or a dairy free alternative with chia seeds, hemp seeds, ground nuts, nut/seed butter and dry fruit puree (see above).

Stir cream, half and half, ricotta, soured cream, full fat yogurt or a dairy free alternative into porridge, stews, soups or mashed food.

Serve whole fat yogurt, soured cream or a dairy free alternative as a dip for cut up fruit or toast sticks.

Braise meat or chicken in an oven or in a slow cooker until it's very soft and can be easily separated into shreds.

Make extra-tender meatballs with non-lean minced beef, minced chicken or turkey thighs and ricotta cheese.

Roast or pan fry fish to serve as finger food.

Roast or pan fry tofu with olive oil or coconut oil.

Beat eggs with some cream and scramble in plenty of butter or coconut oil.

Make bean or lentil stews with plenty of olive oil, coconut oil or walnut oil.

Add coconut milk or cream to lentil dhal.