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Sherwood Forest Hospitals  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Food fortification for infants and children

Information for patients, parents, guardians and carers



## **Food fortification is the practice of deliberately increasing the content of essential nutrients in common foods.**

This leaflet provides ideas on how to fortify meals and snacks with extra nutrition. Having a nourishing diet helps children to grow well, to be healthy and reach their full potential.

Children who are unwell or have a specific medical condition recover faster if they receive good nutrition. Adding extra energy and protein to foods gives them a nutritional boost, however, it is important that your child follows a balanced diet including other nutrients, vitamins, and minerals.

Please ensure to check that the foods listed within this booklet are age appropriate for your child. Special consideration should be given with certain foods, for example, nuts pose a choking hazard to children aged under five years, and grapes should ideally not be offered to children under 18 months of age.

## **Why does my child need this diet?**

Your child:

- Is not growing or gaining weight as expected.
- Is not eating/drinking enough.
- Has a medical condition with high nutritional requirements.

## **Why fortified foods help children grow**

Fortified foods add **extra vitamins and minerals** to everyday meals. This helps children get the nutrients they need for healthy growth, strong bones, and good energy levels, especially when life gets busy.

## What are fortified foods?

These are everyday items like cereal, bread, milk alternatives, and spreads that have **added nutrients** such as iron, vitamin D, calcium, and B vitamins.

These nutrients support:

- Strong bones and teeth.
- Healthy immune systems.
- Better concentration at school.
- Steady energy throughout the day.

Common fortified foods include:

- **Breakfast cereals** – often fortified with iron, B vitamins and vitamin D.
- **Plant-based milks** – usually fortified with calcium and vitamin B12.
- **Bread and flour** – UK law requires added iron, calcium and vitamin B12.
- **Margarine and spreads** – often fortified with vitamin A and D.
- **Baby cereals** – fortified to support early development.

## Fortification for infants (6-12 months)

Once babies start solids, fortified foods can help fill nutritional gaps. Common fortified infant foods include:

- **Baby cereals** with added iron and B vitamins.
- **Follow on formula** (if used) containing iron, vitamin D and iodine.
- **Plant-based infant milks** (only those labelled suitable from birth).

Key nutrients for infants:

- **Iron** – supports brain development.
- **Vitamin D** – essential for bones.
- **Iodine** – supports growth and learning.
- **B vitamins** – help release energy from food.

# Fortification for children aged one to five years

Young children often eat small amounts, so fortified foods can boost their intake of essential nutrients. Helpful fortified foods include:

- **Breakfast cereals** with added iron and vitamin D.
- **Fortified milk alternatives** such as soya, oat, pea.
- **Bread and flour** fortified by UK law.
- **Spreads and margarines** with vitamins A and D.

## Foods to choose to add energy and protein to your child's diet

<b>Meat and meat alternatives (high protein)</b>	Include meat, chicken, fish or meat alternatives (such as baked beans, lentils, kidney beans, and tofu) at each meal.
<b>Cheese (high protein)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Serve on crackers/sandwiches.</li><li>• Grate onto vegetables.</li><li>• Add to rice/pasta.</li><li>• Cut into small blocks as a snack.</li><li>• Make cheese sauce to add to meals/vegetables.</li></ul>
<b>Full cream milk (high protein/energy)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make homemade milkshake drinks with cream, milk and fruit.</li><li>• Make soups, puddings, custards, desserts with milk instead of water.</li></ul>
<b>Eggs (high protein)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Add egg to salad (e.g. potato salad).</li><li>• Try a hardboiled egg as a snack.</li><li>• Mash egg with mayonnaise as a sandwich topping.</li><li>• Try an omelette or quiche with chopped meat, vegetables and cheese.</li></ul>
<b>Nuts and seeds (high protein)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Try smooth peanut butter or other nut pastes as a spread.</li><li>• Try hummus or tahini as a dip or spread.</li><li>• Serve whole roasted nuts as a snack if age appropriate.</li><li>• Use in baking (e.g. almond meal).</li></ul>

# Foods to choose to add energy and protein to your child's diet (continued)

<b>Margarine, butter and oil (high energy)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Add to vegetables.</li><li>• Add to rice/pasta/potato.</li><li>• Spread thickly on bread and on savoury crackers.</li><li>• Add to soups.</li></ul>
<b>Cream (high energy)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Add to milk, on breakfast cereals, porridge, desserts, custard, yoghurt, sauces or soups.</li><li>• Add sour cream to meal or side dishes.</li><li>• Add coconut cream to sweet or savory meals.</li></ul>
<b>Avocado (high energy)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spread on crackers, toast or sandwiches.</li><li>• Add in salads.</li><li>• Make guacamole dip (avocado mashed with lemon, salt and pepper).</li></ul>

## Options suitable for a cow's milk free diet

- Avocado 70g (half) – 133 kcal, 1.3g protein.
- Banana 40g (small) – 33 kcal, 0.5g protein
- Olive oil 5g (1 teaspoon) – 38 kcal
- Cashew nut butter 15g (1 tablespoon) – 80kcal, 2.5g protein
- Peanut butter 15g (1 tablespoon) – 85 kcal, 3.2g protein
- Oat cream 30ml – 45 kcal, 0.3g protein
- Hummus 15g (1 tablespoon) – 92 kcal, 2g protein
- Tahini paste 15g (1 tablespoon) – 133 kcal, 1.3g protein
- Oat milk (with added calcium and vitamins) 100ml – 45 kcal, 1g protein
- Hemp milk 100ml – 40 kcal, 0.1g protein
- Soya milk (unsweetened, fortified) 100ml – 26 kcal, 2.4g protein
- Soya yoghurt (calcium fortified) 40g – 29 kcal, 1.3g protein
- Tofu 30g – 23 kcal, 2.4g protein
- Coconut oil 5g (1 teaspoon) – 33kcal

## Contact details

If you need any further advice, please telephone 01623 622515 and ask to be put through to the Nutrition and Dietetics department, or email [sfh-tr.dietetics@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.dietetics@nhs.net)

### Further sources of information

NHS Choices: [www.nhs.uk/conditions](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions)

Our website: [www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk](http://www.sfh-tr.nhs.uk)

### Patient Experience Team (PET)

PET is available to help with any of your compliments, concerns or complaints, and will ensure a prompt and efficient service.

**King's Mill Hospital:** 01623 672222

**Newark Hospital:** 01636 685692

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If you would like this information in an alternative format, for example large print or easy read, or if you need help with communicating with us, for example because you use British Sign Language, please let us know. You can call the Patient Experience Team on 01623 672222 or email [sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net](mailto:sfh-tr.PET@nhs.net).

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