

5 TIPS TO HELP NOURISH YOUR CHILD WHEN THEY ARE SICK

Despite all our best efforts, sometimes our children get sick. It can be a stressful time for parents, especially when their child has been on a “wellness rollercoaster” with multiple illnesses over recent months.

When children are unwell, their appetites decline, however this is not the time to forget about good nutrition. This is because their nutritional requirements increase to help their little bodies fight off infection.^{1,2} In addition, their gut may not absorb nutrients as well when they are sick.¹

Sometimes it may take children a while to build up their appetite and nutrient intake after being sick, increasing their risk of becoming ill again.

Of course, we don't want to pressure them to eat, however there are a few things we can do to support our child's nutrition during these times.

Here are 5 tips to help encourage your child's intake when they are unwell.

1 Keep them hydrated

This is super important and can't be overlooked. Diluted fruit juice, water, soup, and broth are great ways to replenish fluids. If your child is not a good drinker, ice blocks or fruits with a high-water content like watermelon and grapes are good options.



2 Stick to a routine

Even though your child may not be hungry, offer them food and fluids regularly throughout the day to keep their energy levels up. Stay away from rich, fried greasy foods as these foods may not be well tolerated.

3 Offer some of their favourite foods

Your goal is to get something into your child, so offer them their favourite foods or bland foods like crackers, toast, pasta, or rice which are usually well received. Yoghurts, milk drinks, smoothies and custards also often go down well.



4 Boost the nutrition in their food

For peace of mind, you may wish to boost your child's intake with a nutritious supplement such as PediaSure. PediaSure is rich in essential nutrients, antioxidants, prebiotic fibre and a probiotic to support gut and immune health.³ PediaSure powder can be mixed with water or milk and served chilled or it can be added into their preferred food and drinks. For recipes using PediaSure visit www.pediasure.com.au/recipes

PediaSure has been clinically shown to reduce the number of sick days and respiratory infections in nutritionally at-risk children.^{2,3}

5 Provide more foods that are nutrient-rich and have immune benefits

This may include Vitamin C-rich fruits and vegetables,⁴ homemade chicken soup, broth and garlic. Also consider immune-boosting herbs such as elderberry, andrographis⁵ and echinacea.



Rest, fluids and “whatever they will keep down” is what you need to aim for. Be patient as it may take a little while for your child's appetite to return fully. Fingers crossed they recover quickly for you, and you have a happy, energetic child running down the corridor very soon!

For additional support for your child, speak to an Accredited Practising Dietitian.

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References: 1. Scrimshaw N. *Journal of Nutrition* 2003;133:316S–321S. 2. Ghosh et al. *Journal of International Medical Research* 2018;46(6):2186–2201. 3. Huynh DTT et al. *Journal of Human Nutrition Dietetics* 2015;28(6):623–635. 4. Maggini S et al. *Journal of International Medical Research* 2010;38:386–414. 5. Dai Y et al. *Critical Review of Food Science Nutrition* 2019;59(1):S17–S29.

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