

3 WAYS TO STIMULATE YOUR CHILD'S APPETITE

Many factors can affect children's appetites including tiredness, stress, medications, illness, gut issues such as constipation or tummy pain and deficiency in nutrients,¹ such as iron and zinc.

A young child may not necessarily be able to communicate why they are not hungry,² so it is up to parents or caregivers to work through the possible influencing factors to better understand why they may not be eating.

Here are 3 ways to help stimulate your child's appetite:

1 Review the routine and structure of mealtimes

This is a great place to start. Make sure you have set meal and snack times, with a good 2–3-hour gap in between to help stimulate appetite. Wherever possible, eat together as a family and keep mealtimes happy and stress-free.



2 Restore nutrients

Work with a dietitian and/or doctor to correct any nutritional deficiencies your child may have, such as iron and/or zinc deficiency. Iron and zinc help to support a healthy appetite as:³

- Iron helps to decrease the 'fullness' hormone.⁴
- Zinc changes the tastebuds to make food more appealing.⁵



3 Use Oral Nutritional Supplements

Oral nutritional supplements (ONS), specifically formulated for children at nutritional risk, can be used as part of your child's daily intake. They can be a great way to improve your child's overall nutrient intake, especially when their appetite is poor.

Add a liquid ONS such as PediaSure Ready to Drink to their school lunch box, or mix PediaSure powder to water, milk or their preferred food and drinks to improve their overall nutritional intake.

PediaSure which contains important nutrients like iron and zinc has been clinically shown to help improve the appetite of nutritionally at-risk children within 4 weeks.^{6*}

*When given in conjunction with dietary counselling.

So, if your child's appetite is poor, it is worth having a think about why this may be, and then coming up with a strategy that aims to increase their nutrient intake. If you have ongoing concerns about your child's intake, it is recommended that you consult a healthcare professional.

Try this easy Fruit Sticks with Chocolate Sludge recipe for a fun way to stimulate your child's appetite, and make eating fruit more exciting.

INGREDIENTS

For the chocolate sludge

- 8 scoops PediaSure chocolate
- 200mL water (or 200mL PediaSure chocolate ready to drink)
- 1 cup milk
- 2 tablespoons sugar

- 1 tablespoon cocoa powder (or raw cacao)
- 1 tablespoon custard powder

For the fruit sticks

- 2 cups fresh fruit pieces (such as apple, pear, banana, orange, strawberry)
- 8 small skewers (e.g. bamboo)

METHOD

1. Add PediaSure to water and stir well until dissolved. Set aside.
2. In a saucepan, whisk together the custard powder, cocoa, sugar and milk.
3. Bring to the boil over a medium heat while stirring constantly.
4. Remove from heat. Stir in PediaSure and mix until smooth.
5. Heat gently over low heat until warmed through – do not boil.
6. Pour into 4 serving bowls and enjoy warm or chilled.
7. Thread fruit onto skewers and serve 2 with a bowl of sludge for dipping.

TIPS

For toddlers, instead of using sticks, cut fruit into larger pieces they can pick up.

If your child has allergies to egg or gluten, choose custard powder that is egg-free and gluten-free.

For more recipes using PediaSure visit www.pediasure.com.au/recipes

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

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References: 1. Manikam R, et al. *J Clin Gastroenterol* 2000;30(1):34–46. 2. Byrne R, et al. *International Journal of Behavioural Nutrition and Physical Activity* 2017;14:123. DOI 10.1186/s12966-017-0582-z. 3. Kusumastuti A, et al. *The Indonesian Biomedical Journal* 2018;10(2):133-139. 4. Gao, Yan et al. *Journal of clinical investigation* 2015;125(9):3681-3691 doi:10.1172/JCI81860. 5. Krebs NF et al. *Am J Dis Child* 1984;138:270–73. 6. Huynh DTT et al. *J Hum Nutr Diet* 2015;28:623–35.

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