



Each child grows at his own rate. Some children grow faster, some slower. A healthy child grows at a steady rate and has energy.

Here are some causes of poor growth:

- The child isn't eating enough food or eating the wrong types of food.
- The parents are limiting how much food is offered to the child.
- The child is sick.

If your child is not eating well, ask these questions:

- **Does my child eat 3 meals and 2 or 3 snacks a day?** Make sure meals and snacks are offered at regular times. Children who eat constantly throughout the day may not ever get hungry and may not eat enough food for proper growth.
- **How often does my child eat candy, chips, cookies, or sweet beverages?** These foods don't provide enough nutrients for good growth and can ruin your child's appetite for mealtime foods. Only offer these foods once in awhile.
- **Does my child snack a lot before meals?** Snacking too close before meals can ruin a child's appetite. Offer snacks about two hours before the next meal.

- **Is mealtime pleasant?** Eating is more enjoyable in a happy, relaxed setting. Enjoy mealtime yourself. Relax! Offer 2-3 types of healthy foods and let your child decide how much of those foods to eat.

Other tips

- Eat meals together with your child whenever possible. Children eat better when they are with parents and other people they know and trust.
- Serve child-size portions and let your child decide how much to eat. It's ok if they don't want to eat very much. They can eat more at the next meal or snack.
- Let your child help you shop for groceries and prepare food. They will be more likely to eat when they helped with the meal.
- Turn off the TV during meal and snack times. Children eat better without distractions.

Try these foods to help your child grow

- peanut butter on crackers
- toast with melted cheese
- bean and cheese burritos
- pudding made with whole milk
- milkshakes
- cereal and milk



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Health & Environment

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