



## **Working with Low Appetite Due to ADHD Medication**

Take advantage of the natural appetite at the time of day where the medication hasn't kicked in yet, and also when the medication is wearing off.

- This is usually first thing in the morning, or towards the end of the day at dinnertime.

If the medication is in full effect at lunch time, there may not be much lunch consumed.

- Offer an after school snack when the child gets home, watching the size of it so it doesn't impact dinner.

Talk to your physician if you think the medication schedule may benefit from adjusting.

- For example, depending on the child, some parents will choose to not give the medication on the weekend, if appetite is being severely impacted during the week.

Large snacks offered right before bed or later at night may reduce appetite for breakfast in the morning.

### **What to Provide**

A relaxed, low stress, low pressure and supportive environment for eating.

Focus on higher calorie, nutrient rich foods if your child is underweight.

- Adding butter, margarine, cheeses, or healthy oils over pasta, potatoes, rice, and bread. Nut butters are a good option at home too.

Key nutrients to support brain function include:

- iron, zinc, magnesium, omega-3's, fibre, folate, and healthy fats (see handouts posted with some additional ideas on where to find these food sources).

Combine 2-4 food groups per snack or meal to make it more nutrient rich and balanced.

For example: banana + peanut butter; greek yogurt + granola; French toast + berries; whole wheat waffles + scrambled eggs; animal crackers + raisins; egg, cheese, and salsa wrap.

Some children prefer stronger flavored foods:

- Parmesan cheese, hot sauce, garlic, olives, etc. Experiment to see what your child enjoys.

Always serve a new food along with a food you know your child enjoys.

- If you're child doesn't want to try the new food, that's OK! It may take 10 to 50 times of seeing the new food prior to tasting or trying it.

Get curious – there are so many other ways to learn about new foods than just tasting it.

- Try using the other 4 senses, if your child isn't up for eating or tasting it quite yet. How does it look (sight)– color, texture, how does it smell (smell), what does it feel like (touch), what does it sound (hear) like when you (the parent) eats it?.