

Good nutrition is especially important for children with special needs, regardless of whether a child has chewing or swallowing difficulties.

### **WHAT IS GOOD NUTRITION?**

- Having a balanced healthy diet, rich in all of the food groups.
- Having sufficient calories or energy for normal growth and development.
- Having enough fibre.
- Having enough fluid.

### **GOOD NUTRITION CHECKLIST**

Work out if a child is receiving good nutrition by answering the following questions:

#### **1. Is the child eating all of the 5 food groups?**

- Breads and cereals (e.g. regular bread, muffins, crumpets, cereal, oats, pasta, rice, noodles, barley).
- Dairy Products (e.g. milk, yoghurt, custard, cheese).
- Meat and meat alternatives (e.g. red meat, chicken, fish, eggs, baked beans, red kidney beans, lentils, chick peas, nuts - appropriate for child's age).
- Fruit – a variety of different colours.
- Vegetables – a variety of different colours.

#### **2. Is the child getting enough calories/energy for normal growth and development?**

- Does the child appear to be in good proportion – is he/she well matched for weight and height?
- Does the child have good energy levels? Does he/she feel like sleeping a lot?

*If you are unsure about these questions, check with your doctor or dietitian.*

#### **3. Is the child eating enough fibre?**

- Does the child have high fibre breads and/or cereals (e.g. grainy bread, Weetbix, Sultana Bran, porridge, muesli, barley)?
- Does the child have good amounts of vegetables and fruit (preferably unpeeled to retain more fibre), dried fruit, nuts (appropriate for the child's age) or seeds?
- Does the child eat legumes, such as red kidney beans, baked beans, lentils, chick peas?

#### **4. Does the child getting enough fluid?**

- Children need to drink regularly throughout the day to keep them hydrated (at least 1 Litre of fluid/day is a good start).
- Water is the best fluid, however other drinks, such as milk and 100% juice, can be included in their fluid intake.

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