

# THRIVING *with* RETT

## NUTRITION GUIDE

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Always consult your child's doctor before beginning a nutrition plan. Don't stress out about giving your child the "perfect" nutrition. Kids and adults with Rett are all different, just like any of us, and they have different likes and dislikes. Follow the nutrition advice here as best you can, but sometimes it's good to just let your child enjoy their food, whatever it is. If she or he loves potato chips or sweet treats, let them have them sometimes! Enjoy your meals together, have fun, and be creative! Always be sure food is cut up into very small bite sizes to avoid choking. For children with G-tubes, a doctor should always be consulted.

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## Fluids

Fluids are so very important for our bodies to run properly. Our bodies are 60% water and our blood is about 90% water. Water is essential for our kidneys, digestion and our immune systems. Water not only keeps you hydrated, but also carries oxygen to every single cell. Water is also effective in removing toxins from the body, so drinking more of it could help prevent toxins from building up and harming the immune system.



**Water is essential for our kidneys, digestion and our immune systems.**

### TIPS

- 1 / Hydrate your child after waking up and before consuming any other foods or liquids.
- 2 / Avoid sodas. Drink juices sparingly. Water is best.
- 3 / Drink until urine runs very slightly yellow.
- 4 / Add some lemon, lime, orange or berries.
- 5 / Water down fruit juices
- 6 / Keep a large water bottle with you at all times

## Fruits and Veggies

Fruit is generally high in Vitamin C, fiber, water, and natural sugars. Fruits also contain high levels of antioxidants, phytochemicals, Vitamin A, potassium and many other things that keep children healthy and immune systems in check. The nutrition in vegetables varies greatly but generally they possess various levels of Vitamin A, B6 and K as well as minerals and carbohydrates. Most vegetables also contain phytochemicals, antioxidants and fiber, all of which fight diseases, inflammation, viruses, and infections.

### TIPS

- 1 / Fresh is Best, Frozen is Next, Canned and Jarred are third but the most shelf stable
- 2 / With canned veggies choose those that are packed in water without added salt

- 3 / Eating any vegetables will give more health benefits than just omitting them so whatever you can find in the stores is going to be better than nothing.
- 4 / With canned fruit choose those that are packed in water or juice rather than syrup
- 5 / 100% fruit juice not from concentrate is best, 100% juice from concentrate is next.
- 6 / Frozen concentrate will keep long periods of time in the freezer.

## Fats

Fat is an essential building block for your body to function properly. Unsaturated fats lower inflammation in the body and are essential for fat-soluble vitamins, like Vitamin D, to be absorbed. Many people think that they need to avoid fat when in reality they just need the right kinds of fats.

### TIPS

- 1 / Use good unsaturated Fats like olive oil, avocado and flaxseed oil. Note: olive oil has a very low smoke point and should never be used for cooking.
- 2 / Use good saturated fats like coconut oil and butter. These are best for cooking

## Carbohydrates

Carbs include starches, sugars and fiber. Enzymes in your child's body break down carbs into glucose which fuels the body. Although carbs are an essential source of energy, they are not an essential nutrient like vitamins, amino acids (protein) and essential fatty acids (fats). We can get all of our daily

**We can get all of our daily nutrients from fats and protein without consuming any carbs so be mindful of this.**



nutrients from fats and protein without consuming any carbs so be mindful of this. It's tempting to grab the chips, crackers, and processed foods that are typically shelf-stable and keep the kids happy. However, while often inexpensive, these

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foods will fill bellies but do nothing to fuel bodies and in large quantities can be detrimental to immune systems.

#### TIPS

- 1 / Choose complex and unprocessed carbs like whole grains, oatmeal, rice, bulger, quinoa, beans, and legumes.
- 2 / Choose unprocessed carbs with minimal ingredients listed on the package, processed varieties will be packed with salt, seasonings, and fillers.

### Protein

Protein is part of every cell in your body. Every organ and tissue have protein in them that is constantly being broken down and replaced. When protein is broken down by our bodies it is turned into amino acids that are transported and used throughout our body. Protein is an essential nutrient and can be used as fuel as well as a building block for the body. Protein can come from animal sources such as meats, eggs, fish, milk or cheese. It can also come from plant sources like beans, vegetables, and grains. Protein can be expensive, especially animal proteins like meat, fish, and chicken. They can also be scarce at the grocery stores these days.

#### TIPS

- 1 / Choose whole chicken rather than boneless/skinless chicken breast
- 2 / Make bone broth with the bones from the whole chicken
- 3 / Use plant-based protein in place of or to stretch your meat
- 4 / Plant-based protein includes quinoa, beans and legumes

### Additional Information

We have all heard that we should “Eat the Rainbow” and “Fresh is Best.” However, in these uncertain times when you don’t know when you will be able to get to the grocery store or IF they will have the fruits and veggies that your family is used to, we need to be Smart. Additionally, we all know that organic is best but if you can’t find or afford organic then conventionally grown works too.

#### TIPS

- 1 / Be flexible and creative
- 2 / ANY fruit or vegetable is better than NO fruits and veggies
- 3 / Breakdown pesticides with a spray bottle of 10 parts water to 1 part vinegar, let sit for a moment then rinse with water.

For additional information contact Bridget MacDonald at [bridgemacd@gmail.com](mailto:bridgemacd@gmail.com)  
Bridget is a nutritionist and is mom to Annie who has Rett Syndrome.