

Choosing the right snacks for your children



Children need between-meal snacks because they have small stomachs and require small amounts of food more frequently than adults.

Choosing healthy snacks for your child is important.

Snacks based on fruit and vegetables, reduced fat dairy products and whole grains will contribute to your child's nutritional needs and improve the overall quality of their diet. Snack foods that are high in added sugar, saturated fat or salt are generally low in nutrients and often provide unwanted kilojoules that can contribute to your child becoming overweight or obese.

Selecting a healthier snack

The easiest way to restrict unhealthy snacks is simply not to buy them on a regular basis. Children will tend to snack on what is readily available so stock the pantry, fruit bowl and fridge with healthy snacks and include them in the lunchbox.

There are many commercial snack foods available in the supermarket of varying nutritional value. When choosing grain-based snacks, select those that are high in fibre and preferably wholegrain.

Other things to try include:

- Talk with your children and set limits on the number of less healthy snack foods that you allow them to have per week. This includes snacks such as lollies, chocolate bars, donuts, some fruit bars, cereal bars and muesli bars, potato/corn chips, hot chips and many types of savoury and sweet biscuits.
- Prompt your children to select healthier snack options.

Healthy snack ideas!

Some healthy snack ideas to try include:

- fresh, frozen or dried fruit
- reduced fat fruit yoghurt
- reduced fat cheese slices on wholegrain crackers or crispbread
- reduced fat custard with fruit
- potatoes topped with reduced fat cheese and baked in the microwave or oven
- toasted sandwiches with baked beans
- rice crackers or corn cakes
- scones or pikelets (plain, fruit or savoury)
- popcorn (unbuttered without sugar coating)
- toasted English style muffin, preferably wholemeal
- fruit muffins (small serve).

for more information and ideas on healthy eating and physical activity go to www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au