

Healthy Snack Behaviour

Hungry, growing kids can be exceptionally vocal when their stomachs need filling. This calls for healthy snacks that provide energy and satisfy hunger.

Snacking between meals is not a bad thing, provided the right food choices are made. The danger of snacking is that it can unintentionally lead to a large increase of fat and sugar intake.

Less than half of kiwi kids are getting their 5+ a day of fruit and vegetables. Take the opportunity to provide fresh, raw fruit and vegetables for kids to snack on to increase their nutrient intake and consumption of fruit and vegetables for the day.

Kids often do not reach for a drink until they are feeling really thirsty. Thirst is often mistaken for hunger, which can lead to over eating when not hungry. Encourage kids to have regular drinks of water, even when they are not thirsty. Keeping hydrated then allows children to respond appropriately to their hunger cues by only eating when hungry.

Easy access to healthy snacks makes selecting something healthy an easier option. Having fresh fruit, wholegrain bread, crackers and toppings, dried fruit and nuts and low fat yoghurt available all the time makes it easy for you to prepare, or for kids to grab a healthy snack.

Keep healthy snacking in mind when at the supermarket, as food that is put in the pantry will undoubtedly be eaten with hungry kids around. Often storing treats out of sight is not enough to keep kids from finding and eating them, so avoid buying them in the first place!

Everyday items that you already have in your cupboard, such as tinned fruit, raisins, peanut butter or cereal are the best snacks.



Healthy Snack Options

Here are some simple, healthy options:

- Plain popcorn
- Whole grain crackers, water crackers, or corn thins with a variety of toppings
- Vegetable sticks on their own or with a healthy dip
- Nuts, raisins or dried fruit
- Milk or yoghurt
- Bread or a scone

Tips

Get kids involved in coming up with new ideas for snacks. They have fun when making and eating them too!

Keep a bowl of seasonal fruit available.

When using cheese in snacks and meals, grate it first as it covers a greater surface with less cheese.

Have vegetable sticks or fruit cut up on the bench when your kids come home from school.

It's all in the presentation. It's amazing what a little colour (like parsley, gherkin, spring onion, avocado or grated cheese) can do to tomato on toast or a cracker. For another creative option try celery sticks with peanut butter sprinkled with raisins.

The final word

Healthy home-made snacks are the best choice for kids, rather than packaged food such as muesli bars or chippies.

Snacks are by definition a small meal, so to avoid reducing appetite these should be eaten at least two hours before a main meal, or the main meal is adjusted accordingly.

Banana or Peach Smoothie

Smoothies made with yoghurt and milk are a filling healthy snack option

Tip: You can replace the banana or peach with any other sort of fruit that is easy to mash (if you have a blender then harder fruits can also be used).

Ingredients

Small banana or ½ cup tinned peaches (tinned in natural juice is the best option)
200ml cold trim milk
4 tablespoons of yoghurt (optional)
A pinch of cinnamon (optional)

Mash up banana or peaches. Put all ingredients in shaker (you can use a clean, empty milk bottle with a plastic lid if you don't have a shaker) or place in a blender. Shake or blend everything together until it's all mixed and fluffy (about 10-15 seconds). Pour into a glass and enjoy!

Serves 1.

From the Feeding our Futures website
www.feedingourfutures.org.nz

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