

Choosing Healthy Snacks

Nutritious snacks can play an important role when it comes to a child's healthy daily diet.

A healthy snack can help a child maintain constant energy levels between main meals and meet their daily energy requirements. Most snacks should consist of nutrient-dense whole foods such as fruits, vegetables, wholegrains, reduced fat dairy and nuts or seeds. If choosing packaged snacks, choose the option lowest in saturated fat, sugar, and sodium and high in fibre. Packaged snacks should be included only on occasion.

Quick and Easy Homemade Snack Ideas

- Serve of fresh fruit – in the warmer weather try frozen grapes or mango! You can learn more about serving sizes by visiting eatforhealth.gov.au
- Sticks and dips – serve carrot, celery or cucumber sticks with tzatziki, hummus, cottage cheese or tomato salsa
- Wholegrain crackers with reduced fat cheese, avocado or nut butter
- Reduced fat yoghurt – choose a variety with no added sugar. Add fresh or frozen berries for natural sweetness
- Nibble mix – a mix of air-popped popcorn, wholegrain cereal, and dried fruit
- Raisin toast with a thin layer of ricotta or low-fat cream cheese
- Homemade pizzas using wholemeal pita bread or English muffins as the base and topped with vegetables and reduced fat cheese
- Ants on a log – fill celery sticks with low fat cream cheese and place sultanas across the top
- Mini muffins made with wholemeal flour and fresh or dried fruit
- Savoury muffins made with wholemeal flour and hidden vegetables
- Air-popped popcorn
- Home-made bliss balls
- Crispy chickpeas



Gold

If choosing packaged snacks, choose the option lowest in saturated fat, sugar, and sodium and high in fibre.

Packaged Snacks

It is recommended to give children fresh, homemade snacks as packaged snacks are often less nutritious, more expensive and create more waste. However, packaged snacks can be a convenient option and a treat on occasion. Food companies will often use misleading health claims on packaging to entice consumers. This clever marketing can make it difficult to identify which packaged foods are the healthiest option. When selecting packaged foods, it's important to look past these health claims and instead read the ingredients list and nutrition information panel.

Common misleading health claims

"Reduced fat", "light", or "lite"



Food products labelled as "reduced fat" have at least 25% less fat than the regular version of the same food product. However, it could still be higher in fat than the recommended guidelines. The terms "light" or "lite" could be referring to the fat content or the taste, texture, or colour of the food product.

No refined sugar



This simply means there is no refined sugar, such as white table sugar. However, there could still be natural forms of sugar, such as honey, maple syrup or raw sugar, which are all digested in the body the same way and should only be consumed in small amounts on occasion.

No artificial colours or flavours



This means the colours and flavours in the food product are from natural sources such as fruits, vegetables, herbs rather than artificial sources. This does not always mean it is a healthier choice.

All Natural



This is often used to make the food product appear healthier however there are no rules on the use of this claim. Foods with this claim can still be high in sugar, salt, and fat. The most natural foods we should be choosing are fresh or frozen whole foods such as fruits and vegetables.

wow
delicious



Organic

This means the ingredients have grown using organic farming practices. It could still be high in sugar, salt, and fat.



Gluten free

This is an important food label for individuals who require a gluten free diet for medical reasons. It means the food product contains no detectable gluten, oats or oat products or cereals containing gluten. A gluten free product is not necessarily healthier and does not need to be chosen over other food products if there is no medical need for a gluten free diet. These products are also often more expensive.



Protein

While protein is an important macronutrient to consume as part of a balanced diet, many packaged foods highlight protein on their packaging. Often these packaged food items are still highly processed and often contain less protein than naturally high protein foods such as dairy products, legumes, eggs, and meat.



Baked not fried

The food product has been baked rather than fried however these food products are often still high in saturated fat and salt.

freshhhh