

Pitfalls of Snacking: Things to Watch For

Snacking is a healthy component of each day, especially for growing children who need nutrients to mentally, physically and emotionally develop. This handout gives suggestions to avoid the “pitfalls of snacking,” so snacking does not lead to overfed and under-nourished children.

Kids who are allowed to graze all day long often have a hard time figuring out when they're truly hungry — one key to maintaining a healthy weight in childhood and later in life.

The key to smart snacking is planning: offer your kids healthy snacks at regularly scheduled times.

Kids between the ages of two and 18 are getting about 526 calories a day from snacks, which is roughly a 200-calorie-a-day increase compared to a decade ago. Multiply 200 calories by 365 days, and you're looking at a weight gain of 20 pounds in a year.



Research shows that snacking on the wrong food and the wrong amounts can cause kids be overweight.

Junk food companies aim to target kids because they know they are training their taste buds for life.

Sugary treats and other junk food can lead to a quick crash and overeating at the next meal.

A rule of thumb is that the harder a product's packaging tries to convince you its contents are healthful, the more important it is to turn the product around and take a moment to consider the nutrition facts panel and ingredients to determine if the claims are justified.

One quick way to assess a nutrition label is to look to see if sugar or salt are listed in the top five ingredients. In addition to sugar and corn syrup, parents can look for honey, fructose, malt, maltose, molasses, dextrose, glucose, lactose, sucrose, turbinado and trehalose among the ingredients.

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