

Patient Information

Top Tips for Healthy Snacking & Drinks

- You might need to set some ground rules around snacking. If your children help themselves to snacks without asking, or have got into the habit of eating snacks on the go, in front of the TV or in their bedrooms, you'll need to explain that this needs to change.
- Encourage regular healthy snacks between meals especially when it's going to be a while before the next meal. This will stop your children from getting starving hungry and overeating at mealtimes.
- Water and skimmed or semi-skimmed milk are the healthiest drinks to offer your children. Fruit juices provide good nutrition, but are high in natural sugars, only offer them once a day and consider diluting them down.
- Squash and fizzy drinks all contain either sugar or artificial sweeteners. Children shouldn't have too much of either of these, so offer them occasionally rather than as regular drinks.
- There's no need to ban your children from eating high fat and sugar foods and drinks altogether. To get an idea of how much of these foods they are eating at the moment keep a snack and drink diary and then agree with your children how much you are going to cut down by. Aim to move towards "two snax max" one of these should be a super snack based on fruit, vegetables, dairy & starch. The other one can be something yummy – one of your child's favourite foods.
- We should all try to eat fewer snacks that are high in fat and sugar. Even if the rest of the family are a healthy weight why not all swap to some healthier snacks to make sure you all stay fit and well.
- Giving children choice is important to a lot of parents. You can do this by offering choice between a selection of healthy options. Whatever they choose will then be great!
- Decide as a family how many high fat / high sugar snacks you will buy the children each week. Put the number you have agreed into separate boxes with your children's names on them. Explain that once they're gone they're gone..... And stick to your guns when they ask for more.
- If your children always pester you whilst walking through the checkout or past vending machines, save yourself some money and take a healthy snack along with you in your bag. If they refuse this as an alternative, they can't be hungry!

- Larger packets of crisps or bottles of fizzy drink can seem like good value but if you have decided you want to eat less of these foods go for the smaller packets. It won't cost you more and you'll be eating more healthily.
- Watch out for 'buy one-get one free' offers. If you do buy these, put the second one away for the next week and save money next time you go shopping.
- Try not to go shopping when you or your children are hungry. Writing a list and sticking to it will also help the extras to stay on the shelves and out of the trolley.
- Try not to use any food, including high fat and sugar snacks as a way of cheering your children up. If they are down talk to them about what's making them unhappy and see if there is a solution, this way they'll have a healthier way of coping with difficult times as they grow up.

For ideas on healthy snacking & drinks see the "Super Snacks and Drinks Ideas" information sheet.