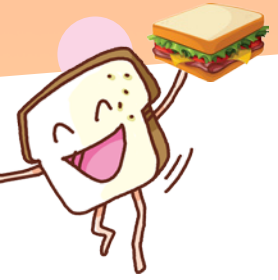




Learning More

About

Snacks



Dear Parents,

Hello! It is me, EatSmart Doggie, again! Although I am not picky about what I eat, like other children, I love eating and snacking between main meals.

Since children tend to move a lot but have a small stomach, snacks can serve to provide additional nutrients apart from our main meals. It can also help replenish the energy, nutrients, and water lost during activities. Even though healthy snacks can replenish the nutrient lost, choosing snacks high in fat, salt and sugar may increase energy intake and result in obesity or other unhealthful consequences, e.g. spoiling the appetite for main meals and preventing necessary nutrient absorption. All these, in the long run, will hinder children's body growth and development.

Hence, we should pay attention to the following points when providing snacks to children:

1. Offer snacks in small portions, which take up about 10% of the total daily energy requirement, i.e. one serving of fruit (like the size of a lady's fist), one cup of low fat / skimmed milk, or a small bun
2. Snack and main meals should be at least 1.5 to 2 hours apart so as not to spoil the appetite for regular meals
3. Provide snacks only once between main meals. In order to reduce the risk of tooth decay, water should be provided outside of meal and snack hours
4. Grains, fruit and dairy products should serve as the main component of your snacks. Follow the healthy eating principle of "3 Low 1 High" (i.e. low fat, sugar, salt, and high dietary fibre) when choosing snacks
5. Go for low fat or skimmed dairy products without added sugar (low fat milk are recommended for children aged 2 to 5, and skimmed milk for those above 5)
6. Avoid consuming food and beverages containing caffeine or artificial sweetener so as not to affect children's sleeping quality and develop their liking for sweet food

Nevertheless, snacking is not a must. If the children are not hungry, parents need not offer snacks. Parents should not turn snacking into a habit, which may cause excessive energy intake. On the contrary, parents may make use of snack time to engage children in activities that are relaxing and beneficial to health, such as drawing, reading, listening to music, etc.

Yours faithfully,

EatSmart Doggie



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www.startsmart.gov.hk



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Maze



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