

If you need some ideas for cooking, you can browse the **“Recipe Sharing Platform”** (Chinese version only) on the thematic website of the “StartSmart@school.hk” Campaign, where you can find many healthy recipes. These ingenious recipes are devised by staff or parents from kindergartens and child care centres and contain dietitians’ tips to give you a better understanding of the nutritional information.



Less Salt for Health  
(infographic factsheet)



Less Sugar for Health  
(infographic factsheet)



Recipe Sharing Platform  
(Chinese version only)



Seasonal Menu



Festive Menu



Part 2 Online version



## Part 2

### Tipson Healthy Eating

- |  |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| I. Increase intake of vegetables and fruit | V. Eating out                  |
| II. Healthy drinks                         | VI. Celebrations               |
| III. Healthy snacks and nutrition label    | VII. Family education          |
| IV. Food reward                            | VIII. Home-school co-operation |

## I. Increase intake of vegetables and fruit

Parents can create chances for children to come across different types of vegetables and fruit to increase their interest.

- When shopping for vegetables and fruit, you can let your children come along.
- If you cook at home, children can help with simple preparation tasks, such as picking vegetable leaves and mixing salad leaves.
- Preparing dishes with vegetables and fruit of various types and colours helps boost young children's appetite and provide them various nutrients.
- Vegetables and fruit can also be snacks and a substitute for unhealthy snacks. Some examples are vegetable sticks, cherry tomatoes, corns, salad leaves or fruit cups.
- When eating out, remember to choose dishes with vegetables and fruit or order a dish of blanched vegetables or green salad.



### Smart Tips

Note that not all vegetables and fruit are healthy as some processed vegetables and fruit have a large amount of added fat/oil, salt or sugar. Choose fresh vegetables and fruit if possible.



The Benefits of Fruit and Vegetables  
(infographic factsheet)



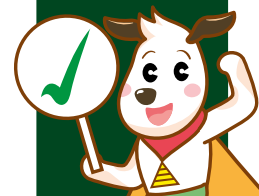
The Benefits of Fruit and Vegetables  
(video)

## II. Healthy drinks

The Department of Health recommends a **daily intake of at least 4 to 5 glasses (approximately 240 ml each) of fluid for children and water is the best choice for fluid replenishment**. However, many children like a variety of sugar-sweetened drinks that are high in sugar (Figure 4), without being aware that these drinks will lead to excessive intake of sugar.

Excessive intake of sugar can cause tooth decay, while excessive intake of energy can increase the risk of obesity! The World Health Organization recommends that children's sugar intake should not exceed 10% of their total energy intake per day. **Take a 4-year-old boy who consumes 1300kcal per day as an example. His sugar intake should be less than 32.5g (about 6.5 teaspoons).**

### Choose



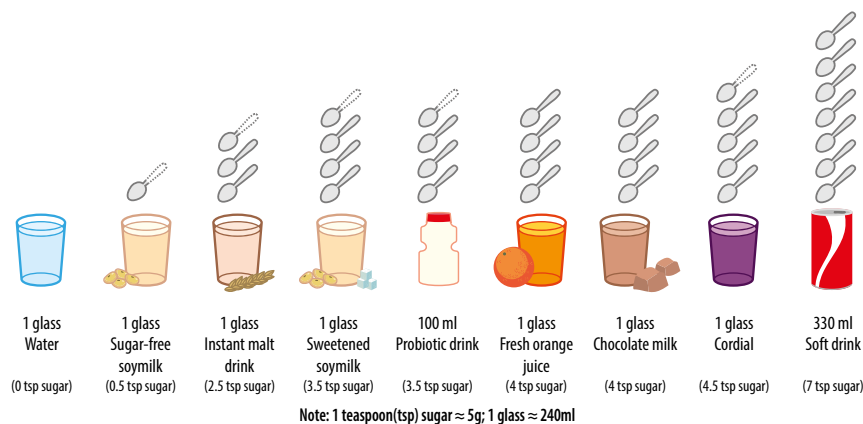
- ✓ Water
- ✓ Low-fat or skimmed milk (original flavour)
- ✓ Calcium-fortified, low-sugar soymilk
- ✓ Clear soup

### Avoid



- ✗ Instant drinks excluding milk powder (e.g. malted drinks, chocolate drinks, fruit juice concentrates)
- ✗ Drinks with added sugar or artificial sweeteners (e.g. soft drinks, fruit juice with added sugar, yoghurt drinks, probiotics drinks, sports drinks, chrysanthemum tea, chocolate milk, fruit-flavoured milk)
- ✗ Drinks with caffeine (e.g. lemon tea, milk tea, milk tea with pearl tapioca, black tea, coffee)

Figure 4 Comparison of sugar content in drinks



## Smart Tips

Pure fruit juice has lower nutritional value than whole fruit. For example, 180ml of pure orange juice contains about twice the energy of an orange and 3 teaspoons of sugar but only  $\frac{1}{6}$  dietary fibre of an orange. Thus, children should not drink pure fruit juice every day.

**It is advisable not to drink pure fruit juice more than 2 times a week and not more than 180ml each time!**



## Quiz

- Can my kids consume drinks labelled “sugar free” as much as they like?
- My kids do not like to drink water. What should I do?
- How are sports drinks different from energy drinks?
- Can young children consume energy drinks or other caffeine drinks (e.g. lemon tea and milk tea)?



Healthy Tips

## “Healthy Drinks at School” Charter



To reduce young children’s sugar intake and enhance a school culture conducive to healthy eating, the “StartSmart@school.hk” Campaign launched the “Healthy Drinks at School” Charter in the 2018/19 school year. Kindergartens and child care centres are encouraged to become a signatory of the Charter and make a commitment:

1. to encourage young children to drink water
2. to make healthy drinks available to young children
3. not to provide drinks with added sugar or drinks with a relatively high sugar content
4. not to use food as a reward



“Healthy Drinks at School” Charter



The Fact about Fruit Juice  
(infographic factsheet)



The Fact about Fruit Juice  
(video)



Less Sugar for Health  
(infographic factsheet)



Examples of Healthy Drinks



Soup Recipes for Kids

### III. Healthy snacks and nutrition label

#### 1. Snack choices

Healthy snacks follow the healthy eating principles of “3 low 1 high” (i.e. low-fat, low-sodium, low-sugar and high-dietary fibre). For example, hard-boiled eggs can provide young children with protein, which is essential for their growth. Meanwhile, fruit is a rich source of dietary fibre, vitamins and minerals. Parents should be a role model and eat healthy, nutritious food. To avoid tempting your children, keep unhealthy snacks out of the house.

##### Choose



- ✓ Fresh fruit, dried fruits with no added fat/oil, salt or sugar
- ✓ Fresh vegetables (e.g. cherry tomatoes, pumpkin, cucumber)
- ✓ Wholemeal bread, boiled sweet potato, steamed bun, macaroni
- ✓ Hard-boiled egg, dry-roasted plain nuts

##### Avoid



- ✗ Sweets, chocolate
- ✗ Potato chips, crisps, dried meat floss, jerky, wasabi green peas, fish sausage
- ✗ Desserts (e.g. cake, ice cream, popsicle, jelly candy, ready-made sweet soup)



#### Smart Tips

Some cakes, egg rolls, pastries, crackers and French fries are made with margarine or shortening. Not only are these snacks high in fat, sodium or sugar, but they also contain trans fat, which increases the level of bad cholesterol in our bloodstream and lowers the level of good cholesterol, thereby causing adverse effects on cardiovascular health.

2. Choose prepackaged snacks and drinks wisely

To choose healthier prepackaged snacks and drinks for children, read the “ingredient” information and nutrition label.

List of ingredients

Generally, all ingredients added during the manufacturing process are listed by weight or volume from the most to the least. Such information gives you a quick glimpse into whether the food contains any added fat/oil, salt (sodium), sugar or artificial sweeteners.

Example: ABC Orange Juice



Ingredients:

Water, sugar, concentrated orange juice, pulp, acidity regulator (330), preservative (202), vitamin C, natural colouring (160a), vitamin E

Explanations:

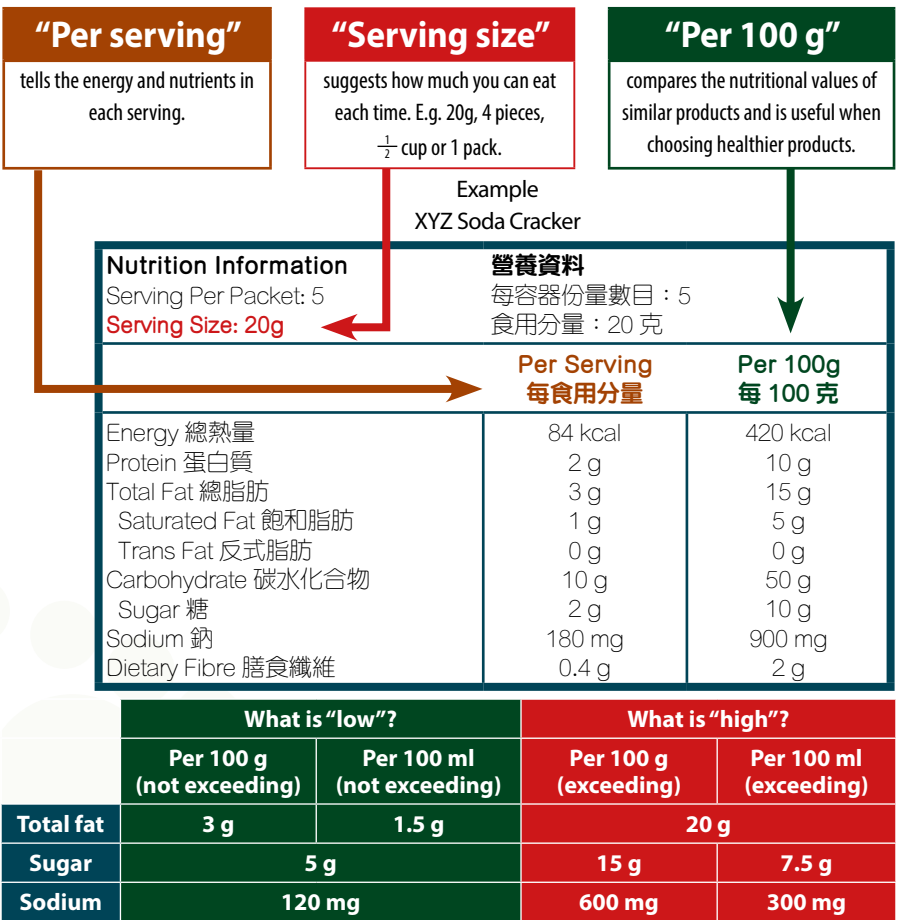
- The “sugar” specified in the list of ingredients does not refer to the sugar that naturally exists in oranges. Instead, it refers to the sugar added during the manufacturing process.
- If “sugar” comes before “concentrated orange juice”, it implies that there is a higher amount of added sugar than orange juice.
- Water and sugar are listed as the first two items in the list of ingredients. This means ABC Orange Juice is not pure fruit juice. It is in fact a drink mainly made from water and sugar!

Nutrition label

In general, read the nutrition label to see whether the total fat, sodium (salt) and sugar contents meet the criteria of “low fat”, “low sodium” and “low sugar” (Figure 5). If the food is high in “total fat”, “sodium” or “sugar” per 100g, it is advisable to eat less!

For more information, please refer to the Centre for Food Safety website at <https://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/index.html>.

Figure 5 How to read a nutrition label



Source of information: Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

## IV. Food reward

Children should be rewarded if they behave well, yet it is not appropriate to give food as a reward. Most foods commonly used as rewards are high in fat, sodium or sugar, e.g. soft drinks, sweets, chocolate and potato chips. Therefore, using food as a reward may:

- encourage children to eat foods high in fat, sodium or sugar, thereby hindering the development of good eating habits and increasing the risk of obesity and other chronic diseases.
- encourage children to eat even without feeling hungry, contrary to the healthy habit of “eating when hungry and stopping when full”.
- encourage children to associate emotions with certain foods, e.g. when they are in a positive or negative mood, they may turn to certain foods either for heightened joy or for comfort.



Parents can use the following alternatives, which do not involve food rewards:

- ✓ giving verbal encouragement “well done!” or giving them a hug.
- ✓ giving out gifts, such as stickers, stamps or stationery.
- ✓ letting children choose their favourite games or activities.
- ✓ giving children extra time for a break, a game or an activity.



Don't Use Food as a Reward  
(infographic factsheet)



Don't Use Food as a Reward  
(video)

## V. Eating out

Many parents often eat out with their children. Bear in mind the following and order healthy dishes to avoid the pitfalls of high fat, high sodium or high sugar:

- Order food based on the “Healthy Eating Food Pyramid”. Grains should take up the largest amount, followed by vegetables. Meat should constitute the least.
- Pay attention to the cooking method: choose steamed, baked, grilled, boiled or stewed dishes.
- Avoid dishes cooked with sauces high in fat or sodium (e.g. white sauce, cream sauce, Portuguese style sauce, curry sauce with coconut milk added, teriyaki sauce). Alternately, request the sauce and grains to be served separately.
- Choose whole grains high in dietary fibre (e.g. red rice, brown rice, multi-grain bread, wholemeal bread, oatmeal). Avoid grains high in fat, e.g. E-fu noodle, instant noodle, oily noodle (yau mian), French fries.
- Avoid processed food, cured food and fatty cuts of meat, e.g. chicken wings and paws, pork bone, ribs, beef briskets, pork belly, pork jowl.
- For desserts, choose fruit or fruit-based ones.
- For drinks, water is the best choice. Avoid drinks with added sugar, artificial sweetener or caffeine (e.g. soft drinks, fruit juice with added sugar, tea, coffee).
- When ordering food, make reasonable requests such as “less oil”, “less salt”, “less sugar”, “sauce to be served separately” or “no sauce”, or have the syrup for drinks and desserts served separately.

When eating out, we can easily savour the “EatSmart Dishes”. Please refer to the “EatSmart Restaurant Star+” thematic website at <https://restaurant.eatsmart.gov.hk>.



## VI. Celebrations

### 1. Healthy birthday party

In children's birthday parties, parents often provide party foods and drinks that are high in fat, sodium or sugar (e.g. cream cake, fried chicken wings, potato chips, sweets, soft drinks). In many cases, families and friends might also give high-fat and high-sugar food as birthday presents, e.g. sweets or chocolate, which are also detrimental to health. Also, children will easily associate these party foods or presents with joyful experience or happiness. Associating emotions with foods high in fat, sodium or sugar in birthday parties will hinder children's development of healthy eating habits in later life. Indeed, such adverse effects will not only affect your children but also those from other families. Parents should thus organise "healthy birthday parties" to foster children's development of a proper attitude eating.

Here are some tips for parents:

- Put the focus of birthday parties on something else other than food, e.g. games, magic shows, costume parties, picnics. Do not simply rely on the provision of party foods to create a fun-filled atmosphere.
- Choose healthier ingredients if food is served. A fun-filled atmosphere can be created with the provision of healthy foods of different colours and shapes.
- Choose plain sponge cake instead of cream cake that is high in fat. You may decorate the sponge cake with fresh fruit for the celebration.
- Do not provide foods and drinks that are high in sugar, e.g. sweets, chocolate, soft drinks, fruit juice with added sugar.
- Give stationery, stickers, storybooks, toys, etc., instead of food as birthday presents.
- For birthday parties in kindergartens or child care centres, parents can communicate with the school and follow the school's healthy eating policy. When bringing food to school for sharing, it is advisable to prepare healthier snacks, e.g. fruit, sushi, sandwich, and use healthy ingredients, e.g. egg, cucumber, chicken fillet, mango.



### Quiz

- Is it alright to offer foods high in fat, sodium and sugar occasionally, such as during birthday parties?



Healthy Tips



2. Festival celebrations

It is a tradition to enjoy festive food during festivals in both East and West. Pay attention not to overlook the health of young children during these joyful festivals. **Remember to follow the principles of balanced diet and “3 low 1 high”.**

Here are some tips on selection of foods and drinks during festivals:

- Enjoy festive feasts by following the recommended food portions in the “Healthy Eating Food Pyramid”. Eat more vegetables and less meat. Choose dishes cooked by steaming, poaching, stewing, baking, stir-frying with less oil.
- Limit the amount of festive food intake by serving only a small amount to children. Main meals should not be replaced by festive food.
- Although most festive foods are high in energy, fat, sodium or sugar, there are still many healthier choices.



Smart Tips

Fresh fruits are diverse in variety, low in energy and rich in dietary fibre. They are good festival gift choices!

Lunar New Year

Family Reunion Dinner and Chinese New Year Feast

It is advisable to choose dishes prepared with healthy ingredients using “3 less” cooking methods, no matter you are eating out or at home.

Chinese New Year Festive Food

Traditional Chinese New Year puddings, sweets and deep-fried snacks are high in fat or sugar. Apart from limiting the amount of snacks, parents can refer to the recommendations below to prepare a healthy Chinese New Year candy box at home.

Traditional Chinese New Year candy box	Healthy Chinese New Year candy box
Candied lotus seeds, candied melon, candied lotus root, candied coconut slice, chocolate, fruit-flavoured sweets	Dried fruits with no added sugar, e.g. dried apricot, raisins, dried longan, dried mango, prune, dried apple
Red and black melon seeds	Seeds with no added fat/oil, salt or sugar, e.g. sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds
Various festive deep-fried foods, e.g. crispy triangles (yau gok), sesame balls (jin dui), sesame cookies (siu hau jo)	Plain rice cakes and crackers, dry-roasted plain nuts*

\*Remark: Parents should be cautious that children of a younger age may choke on nuts.



Chinese New Year Festive Menu



## Mid-Autumn Festival

Traditional mooncakes are made with flour, oil, sugar, salted duck egg yolk and lotus seed paste, which are very high in fat, cholesterol, sugar and energy. One double-yolk mooncake with lotus seed paste contains 840 kcal, which constitutes more than half of the daily energy need of a 4-year-old child. Though a snowy mooncake has lower energy and fat than a traditional mooncake, it is still high in fat and sugar. Parents may give  $\frac{1}{8}$  of a mooncake to young children each time and should avoid eating mooncakes every day.

### Eating tips

- Mid-Autumn Festival seasonal fruits, such as pear, star fruit, pomelo and persimmon, are nutritious and low-energy festive food.
- Glutinous rice balls carry the meaning of “reunion”. Choose those without fillings and serve them with low-sugar sweet soup.
- Mooncakes are a high-fat and high-sugar food. Both young children and adults should not eat too much.
- Choose mini-sized or individually packed mooncakes to limit one’s intake. Choose those with mung bean paste, chestnut paste, fruit paste or low-fat yoghurt fillings.



Mid-Autumn Festival Festive Menu



## Tuen Ng Festival

Parents should choose healthier glutinous rice dumplings and use healthier ingredients to make dumplings with children together.

### Buying glutinous rice dumplings

- Choose smaller ones.
- Those with dry beans, lean meat and mushrooms are healthier.
- Be careful when buying those with red bean paste or other sweet ones as their fillings usually contain lard, which is very high in energy.

### Homemade glutinous rice dumplings

- Choose ingredients that are natural and fulfil the principle of “3 low 1 high”.
- Add high-fibre grains, e.g. pearl barley, oatmeal, black glutinous rice, brown rice as well as dry beans, e.g. red beans, mung beans.
- Use lean meat instead of fatty cuts of meat and preserved meat as fillings. Other choices for fillings include dry beans, dried shiitake mushroom, bamboo shoot, peanut and taro.
- Use healthier vegetable oils instead of lard, which is high in saturated fat.

### When eating

- Reduce the amount of sugar or soy sauce.
- Serve with fresh vegetables and fruit to ensure balanced nutrition.
- Do not overeat to avoid affecting the appetite for main meals.



## Christmas

Parents can refer to the following tips when preparing or ordering a Christmas feast at home or eating out for celebration:

### Eating tips

- Limit the intake of high-fat, deep-fried party foods, e.g. deep-fried shrimp toast, Samosa.
- Avoid fatty cuts of meat such as pork rib and poultry with skin in western meals. Choose lean meat and fish. Reduce the intake of high-sodium Western-style sauces, e.g. black pepper sauce, barbecue sauce.
- Avoid drinks with added sugar, artificial sweeteners or caffeine, e.g. soft drinks, fruit juice, tea, coffee.
- Replace high-fat and high-sugar Western-style desserts, such as cream cake, cheesecake and ice cream with fresh fruit.
- If you receive less healthy gifts such as cookies and chocolate, limit the amount that children are allowed to eat each time. Store these less healthy foods in a place beyond their reach.



Christmas Festive Menu



### Smart Tips

If children eat too much high-energy food during festivals, parents can encourage them to exercise more to burn the extra energy intake.



## VII. Family education

### Be a role model

To help children develop good eating habit at an early age, parents should be a role model in practising healthy eating principles, e.g. having regular meal time, eating more vegetables and fruit, avoiding junk food and picky eating.

### Nutrition education starts at home

Parents can teach their children about food and nutrition in daily life to increase their knowledge of various foods and encourage them to try new foods, so as to gradually improve the problem of picky eating.

- ➔ **Shop together:** Parents can explore new foods in the market or supermarket with their children, teach them the characteristics of different foods (e.g. which ones are vegetables and fruit? Which ones are seasonal foods?), and purchase them as lunch or dinner ingredients to encourage children to eat a wide variety of food.
- ➔ **Cook together:** Let children take care of simple and safe cooking steps, e.g. washing vegetables, scooping seeds with a spoon, cutting bananas into small pieces with a fork, mixing seasonings or ingredients, putting spreads on bread to increase their interest in and acceptance towards different foods. By participating in food preparation, children will surely look forward to eating dishes they helped prepare.
- ➔ **Read together:** Parents should pay more attention to whether the content of stories goes against the principles of healthy eating, and explain and guide their children.
- ➔ **Eat together:** Parents should have meals with their children at home more frequently and remember to create a harmonious and joyful atmosphere, so that children can enjoy the process of eating. There should be no nagging, scolding or tempting either.

There are some points to note during meal time:

- Avoid putting extra seasonings on table, e.g. salt, soy sauce.
- Provide your children with a small portion of food at the beginning of a meal to avoid wastage. This will also enable them to develop a sense of satisfaction after they finish the small portion. Parents may then consider giving more food if necessary. Supplying too much food at one time may bring pressure to children, particularly those with a small appetite.
- Learn good table manners, e.g. turning off the TV, no gobbling, no playing during eating. These help children focus on their meals, avoid experiencing a delay in feeling full, and reduce the chance of overeating, thereby allowing them to cultivate healthy dietary habits.



## Quiz

- Young children eat too slowly or do not swallow food. What should I do?
- My kids like to eat snacks and nothing else. What should I do?



Healthy Tips

## VIII. Home-school co-operation

Children learn healthy eating habits mainly at home and school. With good communication and co-operation between home and school, it is feasible to set a common goal for healthy eating and education for children.

Parents may involve themselves in the following areas:

- Formulate and review the school healthy eating policy.
- Join the school's promotion activities on healthy living with children.
- Read the monthly school menu and let the school know your opinions on the nutritional aspects.
- Work with the school in promoting healthy eating. Bring along healthy snacks for celebrations (e.g. birthday party, Christmas party) and avoid using food as presents.
- Inform the school of any special dietary needs of your children because in case of some health conditions (e.g. food allergy, G6PD deficiency) or religious beliefs.
- Practise healthy eating at home. Create a consistent healthy eating environment at home and school to help young children develop a healthy eating habit.