

CAN WE AFFORD TO EAT HEALTHY FOOD?



Feedback we are getting from concerned teachers, parents, canteen and school food service staff is that prices of healthy foods are sky-rocketing and it is becoming more difficult to feed a family well. So we put on our detective hats and ventured into the supermarkets to see for ourselves.....and indeed we found that prices have increased – and not just the healthy food. Food in general is expensive – and it doesn't help when our spare cash is often absorbed by the rising cost of essentials such as power and petrol.

For this issue of Healthy Nibbles we have focused on snacks and what we did find, however, was that it is the same price or less in some cases to select the healthy choices compared to those that are packaged and highly processed – so why not offer your children these options.

To start with, and to help you get your 5+A Day we looked at the fruit and vegetables which range in price depending on season – kiwifruit 20c, carrots 22c, mandarins 27c, bananas 35c, pears 40c, apples 50c and canned fruit 50c per serve with 3 serves per can.

As an alternative a packaged snack costs at the higher end of 45c for a LCM or String, 55c for Le Snak and 81c for a Milo bar, compared to 50c for a Signature Fruit Cereal bar which is the healthier option being lower in fat and sugar.

Sweet biscuits are particularly expensive for such a small serving size with Toffee Pops and Squiggles at 28c per biscuit. For a more substantial snack try a sandwich with bread at 5c per slice, a pikelet at 36c or a crumpet at 21c. Another sweet snack is dairy food at 99c a pottle compared to fruit yoghurt, of which one brand is usually on special at 50c a pottle, or similarly, a jelly pottle at 99c compared to homemade jellies with added fruit for 16c each.

Other good snacks for children, to either take to school or have at home, are rice crackers at 36c for 10, Vitalife at 36c for 3 or Corn Thins at 10c each – add some thin slices of cheese or marmite. Cheese topped buns at 35c or Pita Pockets at 31c with your favourite filling are also tasty alternatives. These options are far more nutritious than a packet of crisps or similar product which are around one third fat!

Overall – we agree with your concerns – it can be difficult to afford the foods you would like, whether they are healthy or not! But, whatever your budget, wouldn't it be better to spend what you have on the healthy options if they are similar prices or less than the others – your children deserve it!

We would be interested in your feedback on this especially if your children have some favourite healthy snacks – don't forget to look for the bargains!

Healthy Nibbles

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For more information visit: www.cph.co.nz

Canterbury

District Health Board

Te Poari Hauora o Waitaha