

Healthy snacks for under fives

Small children have small stomachs and filling them up just three times a day may not provide them with enough energy for growth and activity. Grazing or snacking all day is not recommended as it is bad for teeth and doesn't establish good eating patterns. Small snacks up to three times a day can be offered to small children.

Over the day, foods from each of the four food groups should be offered to small children. **Try some of these snack ideas...**

Breads & Cereals

Sandwiches: Try different types of breads, rewena, pita, rolls, wholemeal and white. Cut sandwiches into different shapes, layer them, or roll them up.

Toast: Make it either plain, with a spread or baked in the oven with a topping such as cheese, sweet corn, baked beans or spaghetti. Try toasted raisin bread or mousetraps.

Pasta: Children are often big fans of pasta. They like it cooked on its own (try some interesting shaped ones) or in a sauce. Take care with the instant or quick-cooking noodles that come with a flavour sachet. The flavour is very salty. Either don't use it (replace with pasta sauce), or use only a little of it in the noodles.

Baked goodies: Make little scones or mini-muffins cooked in tiny tins.

Crackers: Crackers are crisp and often tasty. Look out for and avoid ones that are very salty and/or greasy to touch as they are often high in fat. You can top crackers with all sorts of things – tomato, grated carrot and cottage cheese, peanut butter, cheese and relish.

Fruit & Vegetables

Fruit and vegetables are great snacks. Cut fresh fruit into pieces and offer with a little dish of yoghurt to dip them into. Pieces of vegetable either raw or cooked can be offered with a savoury dip. In summer frozen pieces of fruit are popular, natural popcorn is also great for snack time.

Milk & Milk products

Milk is a great drink for children. Offer homogenised milk to under two's, introduce reduced-fat milk to the over two's, and low fat milks to the over fives. Yoghurt or dairy food and cheese make food snacks too..

So where do the biscuits and chippies fit?

Occasional Foods

While pre-schoolers may find these foods highly desirable they are normally high in fat, salt and/or sugar and should only be offered every once so often.

Healthy Nibbles for Tots

Nutrition and Physical Activity Information for Under 5s

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

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