



FOOD MATTERS

with Culinary Nutritionist Sue Radd

HOW TO GET KIDS TO EAT MORE FRUIT

Real fruit is being displaced by packaged snacks, soft drinks and junk foods in children's diets, all of which can lead to early chronic diseases.

An analysis of the 2007 Australian National Children's Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey found that almost half the kids polled ate after-school snacks that contained high amounts of saturated fat, such as biscuits, cakes and pastries, and at least 30 per cent of their daily kilojoule intake came from these processed foods!

Yet many of these children didn't achieve their daily target for whole fruit intake, with only 1 per cent of 14- to 16-year-olds getting enough. Even more surprising, the survey showed that fruit intake tended to decline as children got older.

why fruit is the perfect snack

Fruit is nature's best after-school snack and dessert food. It helps protect kids from asthma, constipation, excess weight, high blood pressure, diabetes and later, heart attack/stroke. For example, one US study found that eating burgers three times a week was linked with a higher risk of asthma, whereas an increased intake of fruit, vegetables and omega-3 fats was associated with a significantly reduced risk of asthma.

how much do they need?

Encourage your kids to eat fruit every day. Following are the minimum amounts they need for good health. (A serving is one medium piece, two small fruit or one cup of cut-up fruit.)

age	daily requirement
2-3	1 serving
4-8	1.5 servings
9-18	2 servings

what parents can do

The best way to influence your kids is to be a good role model. Eat fruit yourself! Teach them about the importance of fruit and introduce them to different varieties in season. Studies show that it can take up to 10 repeated exposures for a new fruit to be accepted.

Buy smaller-sized fruits that fit into a lunchbox or cut larger fruits into small pieces with a melon baller or pear cutter. If you make it easy for them, they'll eat it.

Freeze grapes, pineapple chunks and fruit skewers for hot summer days, and add whole fruit to smoothies for refreshing, wholesome snacks and drinks.

Nutritionist Sue Radd is the award-winning author of *The Breakfast Book* and co-author of *Eat To Live*, internationally acclaimed for showing how savvy eating can combat cancer and heart disease and improve well-being. See www.sueradd.com for more nutrition information.