

Healthy Children

March 2019 Parent Newsletter



Nutrition Math: Are “treats” adding up?

Young children have small appetites and may feel full if they are snacking on treats such as ice cream, cookies, pop, chips and French fries. These foods are often high in added sugar, salt, and/or unhealthy fat, and provide little nutrition. They may replace healthy foods that contain more vitamins and minerals which are needed for ideal growth and development.

Treats are more common and more readily available than they were in the past. Children may be offered treats numerous times in or outside the home, such as at school, parties or after school activities. If you add them up, some days or weeks your child may be having more treats than you think! To decrease the number of unhealthy foods your family may be getting each week,

try to:

- Count all the times you think your kids are eating treats at home and school.
- Add in the treats eaten at after school activities and parties.
- Decide as a family how to cut back on how often and when treat foods are offered.
- Offer healthy choices most of the time at home and at school.
- Bring healthy food choices to parties and events. You may inspire others to do the same.

For healthy food and snack ideas, visit

 <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/nutrition/if-nfs-snacks-for-children.pdf>

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/nutrition/if-nfs-healthy-snacking.pdf>

Articles

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How Much Shut-eye Do Children Need?

Health advice is as easy as 8-1-1

Did you know you can get trusted health advice around the clock from a registered nurse by dialing Health Link at 8-1-1?

Health Link is Alberta’s free 24/7 health information and advice line. They can help assess symptoms and help you decide if you need to seek medical attention.



How Much Shut-eye Do Children Need?

According to the *Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for Children and Youth*, children aged 5-13 years should get 9-11 hours of sleep a night.

Why so many Z's? Sleep is critical to physical, cognitive and emotional development. The right amount of sleep improves attention, behaviour, memory and overall physical and mental health. Not getting enough sleep can result in an increase of injuries, obesity, depression and anxiety.

What makes it harder for your child to get sleep? Children are just starting to experience out of school time demands (e.g., homework, other activities). At the same time, they're becoming more interested in TV, computers, electronic games, Smartphones, the Internet and other technologies. Watching a screen within one hour before going to sleep has been linked to difficulty falling asleep and sleeping fewer hours.

Here are some tips to help your child get a good night sleep:



- Keep a consistent sleep routine, even on weekends.
- Keep your child's bedroom screen free (e.g., no tablets, phones or TVs).
- Help your child wind down with 30 minutes of "quiet time" before getting into bed (e.g., take a warm bath, dim lights, read, do relaxation breathing, address any worries).
- Keep your child's bedroom dark, quiet and at a cool but comfortable temperature.

If you're worried that your child is getting too little sleep, talk to

your health care provider.

Here are some tips for your sleep:

- Be active. But not within 3 hours of bedtime.
- Avoid alcohol before bedtime. It can wake you up during the night.
- Avoid caffeine 4 to 6 hours before bedtime.
- Avoid smoking too close to bedtime.
- Avoid difficult conversations before bedtime.