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Off the menu

Myths Surrounding Healthy Food and Drinks

Fact Sheet

Children don't like fruit

Myth

Fact

Fruit is very popular amongst children and should be heavily promoted. Some children prefer fruit when it is cut into pieces rather than served whole. There are many ways fruit can be used to make delicious and healthy snacks (ie kebabs, fruit cups or frozen). Everybody prefers fruit that is cold and fresh.

Refined sugars are the best source of energy because the body absorbs them quickly

Myth

Fact

Refined sugars like those in biscuits and sweets provide energy but not the essential nutrients for the body to use the energy. Complex carbohydrates such as breads, cereals, fruits and vegetable are preferable to refined sugar. These foods provide a slow, steady supply of energy, as well as the nutrients essential for the body.

Flavoured milk should be avoided because it is high in sugar

Myth

Fact

Flavoured milk is a nutritious drink for children. It contains all the nutrients of plain milk, with some extra energy provided from sugar. It has approximately the same amount of sugar as unsweetened orange juice. Even so, low fat plain milk is the best choice for children.

Canned food is not healthy food

Myth

Fact

The canning process preserves most of the vitamins and all of the protein, minerals, fibre and carbohydrate in the food. Canned legumes like baked beans and four-bean mix are particularly healthy foods. Choose reduced salt varieties and fruits in natural juices where possible.



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Children who are active should drink sports drinks

Myth

Fact

For school children, water is the best thirst quencher. Sports drinks are meant for athletes competing or training in endurance sports. Their purpose is to prevent dehydration during these times and provide some energy. Sports drinks provide the same sugar as soft drinks and 2-3 times more sodium (salt).

Health bars and roll-ups are healthy snack foods for children

Myth

Fact

While health bars do contain small amounts of nutritious ingredients such as oats and dried fruit, they often contain large amounts of sugars and/or fat in the form of raw sugar, glucose, honey and carob or a combination. Muesli bars or fruit bars made from 100% fruit should only be eaten occasionally.

All nutrients are taken out of white bread during the processing

Myth

Fact

White bread is a nutritious food that provides B vitamins, iron, some protein and dietary fibre. While wholemeal bread is higher in these nutrients and therefore preferable, white bread is still better than no bread at all. White bread sandwiches/rolls are better choices than high-fat, low-fibre alternatives such as pastry.

Children need extra salt in hot weather and during exercise

Myth

Fact

Plain water is what the body needs before and during exercise and in hot weather. Most Australians get more salt from their diet than their body needs, even if they don't add it to food during cooking or at the table. Salt occurs naturally in a wide variety of foods and is added to many processed foods.



Department of **Health**
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