

▶ CHILDREN'S NUTRITION TRAPS: Junk food in disguise (from www.GulfNews.com)...1

○ ISSUE 02 | ○ VOLUME 1 | ○ YEAR 2009



▶ HEALTHY TIPS FOR HEALTHY LIVING.....3

▶ ON-GOING PROMOTIONS...3

Bite into Wellness

YOUR BI-MONTHLY DOSE OF HEALTHY LIVING

Children's nutrition traps: Junk food in disguise

By Michelle Gelok

Published: April 01, 2009, 14:20

Many foods targeted at young children masquerade as healthy option. Nutritionist Michelle Gelok helps you distinguish the good from the bad.

With brightly coloured packaging, cartoon characters and superheroes galore, there is no shortage of glossy food packages to catch the attention of children, and their parents.

If you tend to rely on the pictures and words on the front of food packages to make healthy choices, you may want to think again. Some label sleuthing reveals that many of the foods marketed to children as being a healthier choice, don't fall much beyond the junk food category.

In fact, one study by Canadian researchers found that 89 percent of food marketed to kids had a poor nutritional quality – meaning they had high levels of sodium, or had an excessive amount of calories from fat or sugar. Despite this, researchers found that almost two thirds of those foods with a poor nutritional quality had at least one nutritional claim on the package.



Marketing the Myth

While it's easy to spot the obvious offenders when it comes to junk food, such as salted snacks, carbonated beverages and candies, what about the packages that appear to be selling a healthier product? With words like "wholesome", "natural" and even "healthy" on the package, surely they must make the cut as a healthier option, right? Not so.

The truth is health sells, and food manufactures often go to great lengths to make sure their product appears healthier than it may actually be.

In recent years the global rates of childhood obesity have skyrocketed, and the Middle East is no exception. In fact the United Arab Emirates is one of the countries leading the pack when it comes to its children being overweight and obese.

A 2006 study published in the journal Obesity Reviews interviewed over 4,000 children in the UAE between the ages of 5 and 17 years and found that 35 per cent were above a healthy weight range. Another study found that ten-year-old children in the UAE were 1.7 times more likely to be overweight, compared with international standards.

While the statistics are alarming, they're not entirely surprising. Take a stroll down the aisle of any grocery store and the majority of food that is marketed to children falls into the junk food category, by even the most forgiving standards. Combine that with a sedentary lifestyle, and it doesn't take long to pack on the pounds.

While there isn't any official criterion for what constitutes a junk food – it's pretty easy to come up with a list of potential factors. Foods that are high in calories, saturated and trans fat, sugar and sodium could all fall into the unhealthy category.

So what is a parent to do in a time of aggressive advertising and misleading packaging? The best line of defense in preventing unhealthy products from making it into the shopping cart is to look at the nutritional information and ingredient list on the back of the package. In most cases all the information you need to make wise choices is right there on the box, so a little detective work will go a long way when spotting health food imposters.

(Continued on page 2)



Whiz Kidz Skill Development

Your Home Away From Home Learning and Activity Center

Defence Road (Along Mobile Shops), Abu Dhabi
Kids Club ♦ Summer Camp ♦ Workshops
Call: 026417450 ♦ 0505621304
Email: whizkidz@emirates.net.ae

Kids' Meal Coming soon @



Continued from page 2 (Children's nutrition)

Get Label Savvy

When it comes to sorting fact from fiction on food labels, there are a few things worth keeping an eye out for. In high amounts, calories, saturated fat, trans fat, sodium and sugar are the usual suspects that make a food unhealthy. Use the following tips when reading labels to make sure you're getting the healthiest choice for your family.

Ignore the hype: When differentiating junk food from health food, first give the front of the package a quick scan, but don't be fooled by the wording, or glossy pictures – as they don't often hold up to the nutritional information on the back of the package.

Figure out the serving size: Next, look at the nutritional information – the first thing you want to look at is the serving size to determine if the information provided is for a realistic serving size. It's not uncommon for nutritional information to be given for small servings. In other words, you may need to double the info depending on how much your child will actually consume.

Find out what's inside: After that, the ingredient list can give you an accurate idea of what's in the product. Ingredients are always listed in descending order, from most to least, by weight. As a general rule of thumb, the less ingredients the better (it means the product is less processed), and ingredients you generally want to stay away from (added fat, sugar and sodium) should appear towards the end of the list, if at all.

Trans fat

Trans fat is made through a process called hydrogenation, which changes liquid oils into solid fats to make them more shelf stable. Trans fat is usually found in cookies, crackers and other commercially baked goods. Not only can trans fat increase total and LDL 'bad' cholesterol, it can also lower HDL 'good' cholesterol making it especially detrimental to heart health.

There's been a lot of media attention on trans fats lately, so many food manufactures are getting on the trans fat free bandwagon – which is a relief to consumers. The danger lies when trans fat is replaced with coconut oil, and palm oil – both of which are high in saturated fat, another health offender. And, just because a food is trans fat free doesn't necessarily make it a health food, it could still be choc full of calories, sodium and sugar.

Nutritional info: While some countries, such as Canada, require all food products to list the amount of trans fat in the product, other countries including the UAE aren't as strict. Trans fat isn't always listed in the nutritional information, but if it is, look for products with less than 0.2 grams of trans fat per serving.

Ingredient list: This can be your best clue as to whether or not the product contains this artery clogging fat. Trans fat will be listed as hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated vegetable oil, or shortening.

Saturated Fat

Saturated fat is found in animal products and can raise the risk of heart disease because of its ability to raise total and LDL 'bad' cholesterol.

Nutritional info: To help you choose products with low amounts of saturated fat, look at the percent Daily Value (% DV). The percent Daily Value refers to the recommended intake for a nutrient based on a 2000-calorie diet. Keep in mind that children don't need that many calories, but the % DV can still give you an indication if a product is low or high in certain nutrients. As a general rule of thumb, less than 5% DV is considered low, and more than 20% DV is considered high. Choose products that contain less than 5 percent of the Daily Value for saturated fat.

Ingredient list: Saturated fat won't be called that on the ingredient list, instead it is found in products such as butter, ghee, lard, full fat dairy products, coconut oil and palm oil.

Sodium

Sodium is necessary for good health, but in very small amounts. Most people, children included, get far more than they need. Too much sodium can cause high blood pressure.

Nutritional info: As a general rule of thumb, products with less than 140 mg of sodium per serving are considered low sodium products – so use that as a benchmark when choosing packaged products. You can also look at the percent Daily Value (% DV) as a guide, and choose products with less than 5 percent of the Daily Value for sodium per serving.

Ingredient list: Sodium is hidden in many ingredients and may appear on the ingredient list as salt, sodium chloride, monosodium glutamate (MSG), sodium bicarbonate or sodium nitrite among others.

Sugar

Sugar comes in many forms, and while some sugar is naturally occurring, such as in fruit or dairy products, it's often added to foods to make them more palatable – especially in kid's products. While many high sugar foods, such as soda, chocolate bars and cookies are obvious sources of added sugar, other less suspecting foods can also contain a fair amount of sugar including breakfast cereal, fruit juice and bread.

Nutritional info: Sugar, when listed, will appear below carbohydrates in the nutritional information. Four grams of sugar is equivalent to a teaspoon (5ml) of sugar. Keep in mind that this represents added, and naturally occurring sugars. When it comes to packaged products, compare different brands and choose one with the least amount of sugar per serving (just make sure the information given are for similar serving sizes).

Ingredient list: Sugar, like sodium, can be disguised in many ingredients, so watch out for corn sweetener, high fructose corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, sucrose, glucose, honey and molasses.

Major Offenders

There are some products that stand out more than others when it comes to misleading packaging. Breakfast cereal and fruit juice are often marketed as being 'health' foods, but a quick scan of the nutrient information reveals many are anything but.

The majority of children's breakfast cereals are loaded with sugar. In fact, a quick look at some popular kids cereals at the grocery store reveals many have at least 15 grams of sugar per serving – that's almost four teaspoons worth! Healthier breakfast cereals should have less than 8 grams of sugar per serving, and at least 4 grams of fibre. Look for cereal products that contain whole grains – that means the word "whole" will appear in the ingredient list, such as whole-wheat flour, or whole oats. Your best bet is to choose products that list a whole grain as the first or second ingredient.

Fruit juice isn't much better. You may be surprised to learn what's lurking in some seemingly healthy fruit juice. Don't be fooled by

Continued from page 2 (Children's nutrition)

images of fresh fruit on the container — products labeled 'drink', 'real fruit beverage' and 'punch' can have as little as 10 per cent actual fruit juice — in other words, those terms are usually just jargon for sugary water. Instead, look for products labeled 100 per cent pure fruit juice and avoid products with added sugar.

When it comes to making smart choices, take a minute to do some investigative work and find the healthiest product for your child when grocery shopping. While greater transparency may be needed when it comes to labeling and nutrient claims, the truth is between the ingredient list and nutrient facts table, most of the information is there to help you make a healthy choice, so use it wisely.

Reading between the lines

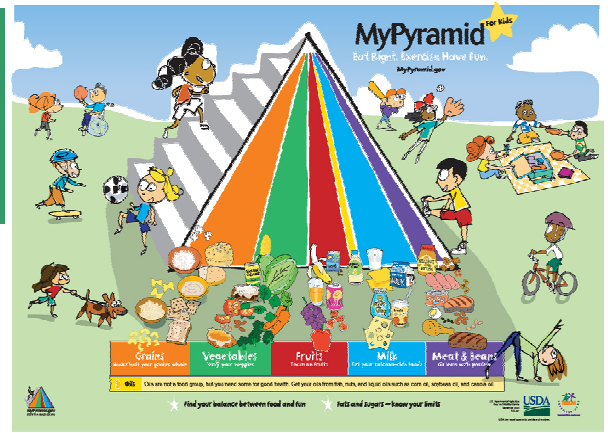
Be wary of product claims such 'reduced fat, sugar or sodium', while they may be healthier choices than their regular counterpart, it's doesn't mean they count as a health food. Just because a product is low in one nutrient, like fat or sodium doesn't mean it's low in others, like sugar or calories. Take soda for example, it's a fat free product, but it's loaded with sugar and certainly doesn't stack up in terms of nutrition.

Don't be fooled by words like 'multigrain', 'natural' or even 'healthy' on food packages — these terms get thrown around pretty loosely and don't hold much weight when it comes to the actual nutrient content of the product.

HEALTHY EATING, HEALTHY LIVING

Nutrition for Children with Special Needs

Dietary recommendations for people with Down syndrome across the lifespan are similar to those of the general population. Recommendations are based on the Food Guide Pyramid. They include limiting fat intake and including complex carbohydrates such as breads, cereals, starchy vegetables, legumes, rice, and pastas in the diet. Recent research has shown that children with Down syndrome have calorie needs that are lower than those of their peers. On average they burn 200 to 300 calories less per day. This is probably not going to change in their adulthood. Instead of limiting calories, which may lead to certain nutritional, vitamin, and mineral deficiencies, people with Down syndrome may have to increase their daily activity levels.



Nutrition Tips & Suggestions

- Promote a nutrient-dense diet by offering choices that are high in nutrients.
- Teach about appropriate serving sizes.
- Provide options to fast-food socialization.
- Offer fresh fruits and vegetables, and low-fat snacks such as pretzels and popcorn instead of high-fat desserts.
- Limit junk foods.
- Exercising, even helping with the household chores, increases energy expenditure.
- Adequate fluid intake, preferably water 6-8 (8 ounce) glasses per day (before and after meals, not during).
- Raw fruits and vegetables (leave skin on), as it is a great source of fiber.
- Dried fruits such as raisins, prunes, and figs.
- High fiber grains/cereal products: bran, whole-wheat flour, whole cornmeal, wheat bran cereals, bran flakes, Grape-Nuts, Shredded Wheat, Fiber One.
- Regular meals during the day, small frequent feedings if possible.
- Wait at least an hour after a meal to exercise.
- Provide Vitamin and Mineral Supplements especially those with zinc and selenium
- Ask if there are any texture modifications needed due to dental and/or oral motor concerns.
- Do not promote sweet chew foods such as caramel, soft candy and other foods that will easily stick to teeth. When this is not possible, encourage timely tooth brushing or offer water, carrot sticks, or other crunchy foods to help clean the sticky foods from the teeth.
- Incorporate soft foods such as bananas, puddings, applesauce, cottage cheese, yogurt, mashed potatoes, and oatmeal in the diet.

On Going Promotions @ The BiteRite Cafe'



BiteRite Brunch

45.00 AED per person
Every Fridays & Saturdays
From 10:00am til 2:00pm



Exclusive to BiteRite Online Female Patrons



Guilt-Free Spa Package @



To book your appointment:
Please Call
+971 2 6179 150

3rd floor, NMC Speciality Hospital,
Abu Dhabi, UAE



For any comments or suggestions please contact

BiteRite

Guilt-free hunger
P.O. Box 37005,
Abu Dhabi, UAE

Tel: 02 6411660

Fax: 026411788

Email: info@biterite.ae



- 20% Discount on F&B
- Priority advance table booking
- Privilege seating for BR Community Events
- 10% discount on BiteRite Sucrose-free Cakes

BiteRite Privilege Card

Please log-on to www.biterite.ae for more information