

SWAP It Everyday

Commonly Confused ‘Healthy’ Lunchbox Snacks:

The supermarket shelves are filled with lunchbox snacks, conveniently packaged ready to be popped straight into your child’s lunchbox. Clever packaging, marketing and health claims make it hard to know which snacks are healthy and which ones are better left on the supermarket shelves. Some of the common claims to be aware of include:

1. PACKAGES WITH PHOTOS OF FRESH FRUIT, VEGETABLES AND WHOLEGRAINS

Companies often use photos of fresh fruit, vegetables and wholegrains on their packaging to make us believe these ingredients make up the majority of the product. However, this is often not the case. Don’t be fooled by the images on the front. Instead, read the nutrition information panel to find out the ingredients.

2. HEALTH CLAIMS

Health claims are a clever marketing strategy which companies use to trick us into believing their product is healthy. Many snacks claim to be ‘wholesome’ or ‘superfoods’, however these health claims have no legal definition, meaning they require no evidence and are often unreliable and false.

3. ALL NATURAL

Just because a product is made from all natural ingredients, it doesn’t mean it’s healthy. Instead of relying on health claims, learning how to read the nutrition information panel and the ingredient list can be a very valuable tool that can be used to compare packaged foods.

4. ‘FAT FREE’ OR ‘SUGAR FREE’

Be careful when products claim to be ‘free’ of a certain nutrient. Companies often make these claims even when it is irrelevant e.g. fruit juice will always be fat free, yet stating this makes their product sound healthier. It’s important to remember if a product is low in a certain nutrient it will be high in another to compensate, meaning it may even have more kilojoules than similar products.

5. GLUTEN FREE

Gluten free does not necessarily make for a healthier product. Unless your child is diagnosed with coeliac disease or a gluten intolerance, there’s no benefit in buying gluten free options. These are usually more expensive and can be lacking in vitamins and minerals.

6. MADE WITH REAL FRUIT

Many products claim to be ‘made with real fruit’. However, they may contain very little or be so highly processed that it provides no beneficial qualities. Instead, look at the nutritional information panel. If fruit is not one of the first ingredients then the chances of the product containing any beneficial properties from the fruit is very minimal.



COMMONLY MISTAKEN 'EVERYDAY' PRODUCTS:

See our list below of foods that's are commonly mistaken to be 'everyday' foods.
We have included easy healthy swaps that you can make in your child's lunchbox today.

• MUESLI BARS

Muesli bars, commonly labelled health bars, superfood bars, oat bars and nut bars are commonly mistaken as healthy snacks. Whilst muesli bars usually contain healthy ingredients such as oats, nuts and seeds, it is the added ingredients that make for an unhealthy snack high in energy, sugar and fat.

Swap from muesli bars to fresh fruit, raw unsalted nuts*, sunflower/pumpkin seeds, roasted fav-va beans or reduced fat yoghurt.

• PRE-PACKAGED CHEESE-DIP AND CRACKERS

Cheese dips and crackers can be easily mistaken as a healthy snack. Cheese-dips such as Le Snacks only contain 50% cheese, meaning they provide little calcium and contain lots of added ingredients, contributing to a high energy snack.

Swap from Le Snacks to reduced fat cheese slices and wholegrain water or rice crackers.

• PACKAGED FRUIT DRINKS / POPPERS

Fruit juice is commonly perceived to be a healthy drink. It's easy to assume it just contains fruit. However, many fruit drinks contain very little real fruit and very small amounts of fibre. Instead they contain concentrate and lots of added sugar, resulting in a drink that is high in kilojoules and sugar.

Swap from fruit drinks to plain water, water with fresh lemon/fruit and reduced fat plain milk poppers.

• SAVOURY BISCUITS E.G. SHAPES

Many savoury biscuits such as shapes claim to be baked not fried, leading the consumer to believe they are a healthier alternative. Did you know biscuits can still be baked in just as much fat or oil? Many savoury biscuits contain 20-25% fat and lots of added salt.

Swap from savoury biscuits e.g. shapes to plain air popped popcorn, rice crackers, rice cakes or roasted legume snacks.

• 'NATURAL' FRUIT STRINGS

Fruit strings and leathers are advertised as a healthy 'natural' lunchbox snack, however this is not the case. These fruit snacks have been highly processed to remove the water content, resulting in a higher concentration of sugar. On top of this they contain added sugars and lack nutrients and vitamins that are found in whole fresh fruit.

Swap from fruit strings to fresh fruit and vegetables.



Artwork: 'Heart of a child' by Lara Went Worimi Artist

- **BREAKFAST BISCUITS**

Breakfast biscuits sound like a quick, healthy option for breakfast on the go or to add to the lunchbox. Breakfast biscuits contain lots of added sugar and fat resulting in a high energy biscuit, essentially making them equivalent to a sweet biscuit. Many claim to contain a certain number of kilojoules however this is usually only for one biscuits, which is not reflective of the real serving size.

Swap from breakfast biscuits to fruit buns, fresh fruit and vegetables, water crackers, rice crackers, rice cakes, Cheerios or Uncle Toby's Fruit Bites

- **DAIRY DESSERTS**

Dairy desserts such as chocolate custard and rice pudding are often placed next to the yoghurts in the supermarket, making us believe they are also healthy. Dairy desserts such as chocolate custard and yogo contain added sugar and fat, resulting in a higher kilojoule product.

Swap from dairy desserts to reduced fat yoghurt, plain custard or reduced fat plain milk poppers.



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