

[IMAGE]

Smart Snack Substitutions for Your Children

By Editorial Staff

smart snack - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark If you're slowly watching your children's weight go up (and not just because they're growing older), it's time to put down the processed, fat-laden food and think long and hard about findings from a recent study in the research journal *Pediatrics*. According to the study, simple snack substitutions can have a dramatic impact on caloric intake. And as we all know, the more calories you take in (above what your body needs), the more weight you'll gain.

In the study, researchers divided 201 children (3rd to 6th grade) into four groups for comparison and placed each child in a room for 45 minutes. While watching TV, children had unlimited access to one of four snack options: cheese, vegetables, cheese and vegetables, or potato chips. After 45 minutes, children with access to the potato chips had consumed a whopping 620 calories each, on average; by comparison, children in the other three snack groups consumed only 60-200 calories apiece (cheese: 200 calories; vegetables: 60 calories; cheese and veggies: 170 calories). And children who ate the combination cheese / veggie snack actually felt fuller than children whose snack consisted of potato chips.

The moral to this story is actually twofold: First, healthy snack substitutions can reduce caloric intake while still filling kids up. Second, kids often eat what's in front of them (or close enough to grab without moving much), so don't stock your kitchen with chips, soda, cookies and other empty-calorie foods (high in calories, but low in good nutrition). You're just asking for trouble.

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