[IMAGE]

Healthy Food Choices 101: Helping Kids Eat Right

By Editorial Staff

If you want kids to eat right, you can talk to them about the importance of healthy food until you're blue in the face, but sometimes you just need to remove the unhealthy options and replace them with healthier alternatives. For example, a recent study assigned 201 students entering the 3rd to 6th grades to one of four snacking conditions: potato chips only, cheese only, vegetables only, and a cheese and vegetable combo. Students were allowed to consume their snack freely while watching a 45-minute television program to gauge which snack scenario contributed the most to caloric intake and feelings of hunger.

While as might be expected, children in the potato chip group consumed by far the most calories (720 calories, compared with 200 for the cheese group, 170 for the cheese / veggie combo group, and 60 for the vegetable group), perhaps the most interesting finding was that children who ate the combination cheese / veggie snack needed far fewer calories to achieve a feeling of fullness than those who ate potato chips.

healthy snacks - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark That suggests they didn't consume fewer calories because they didn't eat the healthier snack, but because it actually filled them up (as good foods are known to do compared with refined, processed foods that tend to spike blood sugar and leave you feeling hungry).

The point here is one that's been echoed for decades, but is too-often ignored: Put good things in front of your children and they might actually like them (or at least try them); put bad things in front of them and you're asking for trouble. That's why experts recommend placing healthy foods / snacks within easiest reach in your fridge and pantry, rather than tempting kids with easy access to the unhealthy stuff.

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