



Keeping Children Healthy

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

NUTRITION



How do I choose healthier snacks to pack for my child in school?

With the whole array of snacking options at the supermarket, it is very easy to find yourself wondering, “Which one of these is actually healthier?”

Parents should consider **FACT** - Frequency, Amount, Calories and Type - when choosing snacks.

Frequency

HOW OFTEN IS YOUR CHILD SNACKING?

Excessive snacking, even with healthy snacks, can still lead to excessive calorie intake and weight gain.



Amount

IS YOUR CHILD OVEREATING ON SNACKS?

Just like with frequency, the amount of snacks your child is eating matters. Overeating, even with healthier options, can still lead to excessive calorie intake and weight gain.



Calories

IS THE SNACK CALORICALLY DENSE?



Look for snacks that have the Healthier Choice Symbol and provide less than 100 calories per serve for your child.

Type

IS THE SNACK HEALTHILY PREPARED?

Choose snacks that are steamed, grilled, baked or dry roasted.

How can I ensure that my child is snacking smart?

CHOOSE NUTRIENTS, NOT CALORIES

Look for nutrient dense options that are light on the calories. Fill up your child's snack box with foods like fruits, nuts, wholegrain sandwiches and sweet potato fries.



LOOK FOR THE HEALTHIER CHOICE SYMBOL (HCS)

Always choose snacks with the HCS as they are healthier when compared to other options in the same food category.

PLAN IN ADVANCE

When packing for snack breaks in schools, plan ahead! Discuss with your child and have a simple menu ready in advance that will allow you to plan for your child's school snacks better.



What are some healthier snack options I can consider?

SAVOURY SNACKS



Select steamed options such as vegetable buns or *mantous*.



Fancy something crunchy? Choose wholemeal crackers or plain rice crackers.



Choose unsalted or unsweetened popcorn.

SWEET SNACKS



Steam a small piece of sweet potato to increase your intake of fibre, vitamin A and certain B vitamins.



Grab a fruit. Not only does the fruit provide you with fibre, it also boasts a range of vitamins and minerals.



Boost your fibre intake by having a slice of fruit bread or wholegrain sandwiches with low fat cheese.

Join our workshop at healthhub.sg/programmes/183/parent-hub/activities-workshops-parents/healthy-eating-active-living to learn easy snack ideas for your child.

How do I make healthier meal choices when eating out with my family?



As a busy parent, you might find it difficult to cook for your child on a day-to-day basis. Fret not, as there are healthier options you can consider when eating out!



PLAN WHERE YOU'RE EATING

Choose restaurants that serve healthier options through our [Healthier Dining Programme](#). Healthier dishes, which are lower in calories, remain delicious and appealing as they are created and prepared by expert chefs. So, go ahead and make your reservation with confidence!

GO LIGHT ON APPETISERS AND DRINKS

Lead by example by going light on the appetisers and drinks. Most of them are high in calories and saturated fat, so they are best avoided or eaten in small portions.



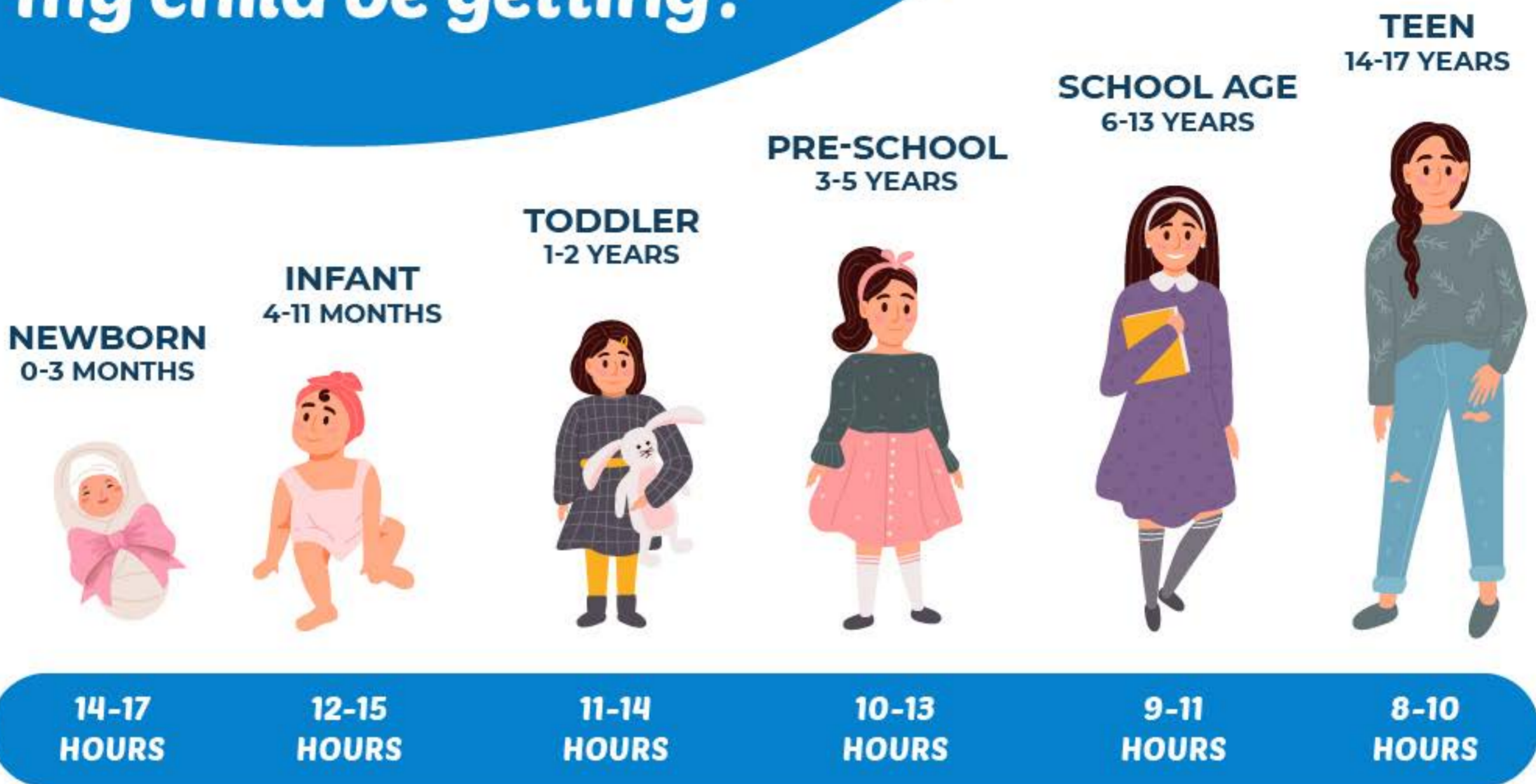
MENTAL WELL-BEING

Why does my child need enough sleep?

- 1** Having enough sleep is important for your growing child's cognitive development. When well rested, your child will be able to learn and remember better.
- 2** During sleep, your child's body also produces growth hormones that help them grow taller. Having enough sleep ensures that they produce the normal amount of growth hormones.
- 3** A good night's sleep helps improve their mood so they can be on their best behaviour.
- 4** Quality sleep keeps your precious child healthy and strong! Lack of sleep is linked to a higher Body Mass Index (BMI) as it affects the hormones which influence weight. Sleep is also important in boosting their immune system.



How much sleep should my child be getting?



How can I help my child sleep better?

Creating a regular bedtime routine helps your child know it is time for bed. As busy as your child gets with school, it is key to keep bedtime routines consistent. Avoid screen time 30 minutes before bedtime as blue light emitted from devices such as tablets, phones and laptops can affect their sleep quality. Here are some suggestions to prepare your child for sleep:

PUT DOWN THE SCREENS



Switch off those devices for sweet dreams. Avoid screen time 30 minutes before bed for better quality sleep.

STAY AWAY FROM STIMULANTS



This include caffeinated food and beverages as well as physical exercises and vigorous activities before bed.

WIND-DOWN AND RELAX



Do a wind-down activity such as reading a story before bed.

Visit healthhub.sg/programmes/117/goodsleep for more bedtime resources and tips.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

Why Do Teenagers Smoke?

Teenagers may experiment with smoking for many reasons:

THEY WANT TO FIT IN WITH FRIENDS

Peer-pressure is very real. They may be influenced by friends who smoke regularly or may take it up just to be accepted by the group. In some cases, they take it up because of someone they admire or think is cool.

THEY ARE STRESSED

Teenagers may pick up smoking to relieve stress and be misled into thinking that smoking can offer some form of relief.

THEY WANT TO APPEAR MORE AS AN ADULT

Many first-time smokers see smoking as part of growing up and think that it makes them look more mature, confident, and cool.



How can I prevent my teen child from smoking?

HERE ARE SOME TIPS ON RAISING TOBACCO-FREE TEENAGERS:



EDUCATE THEM ON THE HARMFUL EFFECTS OF SMOKING

Talk to your teenager about the harmful effects of smoking like breathing problems, developing a poor complexion, wrinkling of the skin, staining of teeth, bad breath, and how it affects physical fitness and stamina.

Talk to them about e-cigarettes and smokeless tobacco as well. Learn more reasons why they shouldn't start vaping at go.gov.sg/lets-get-real-about-vaping



COMMUNICATE OPENLY AND SPEND MORE TIME WITH YOUR TEENAGER

Communicate with your teenager more often.

Let your teenager invite their friends to your home so you get to know them and spend time with your child and their friends.



BE A GOOD ROLE MODEL

If you don't smoke, share your own experiences on why and how you chose not to become a smoker or vaper.

If you are still smoking, make the decision to quit smoking. Find out more about how HPB can support you to quit at go.gov.sg/hpb-iquit

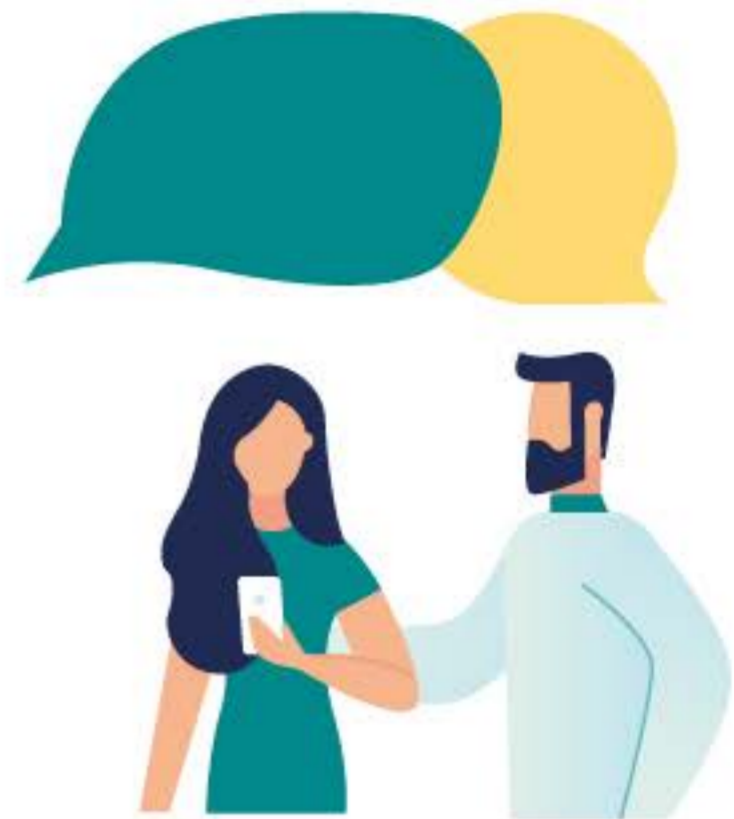


Remember the 3 P(s): Don't Pass Judgement, Be Patient and Be Present

DON'T PASS JUDGEMENT

Try not to ask questions that sound like you are interrogating your teenager. Rephrase them into an observation or remark such as “Hey, I notice that you have started smoking” which sounds less accusatory.

Listen to their views with an open mind and they will feel more willing to listen to your views.



BE PATIENT

Pay attention when your teenager wants to share their thoughts with you. Try not to interrupt or rush to give your comments while they are talking.

Refrain from nagging, shouting, threatening or using emotional blackmail.

BE PRESENT

Believe it when your teenager complains about peer pressure to try smoking. You may feel that it is easy to resist, but it is difficult for a teenager.

Suggest ways that suit your teenager's personality to turn down cigarette offers without offending their friends.

Encourage them to find and hang out with non-smoker friends. Do remind them that you're also their friend and they can always come to you.



HYGIENE

Encourage your child to practise good hygiene habits.

Wash, don't rinse

Learn how you can remove germs effectively from your hands.



STOP RUSHING, START WASHING

It takes at least 20 seconds of scrubbing with soap and water to break germs down.

SCRUB IT CLEAN

Fingertips, between your fingers, the back of your hands and under your nails, a scrubbing motion helps to break down the dirty particles on your hands.

WHAT IF WE COULD SEE HOW GERMS SPREAD?

See how you can break the chain of infection. Wash your hands regularly with soap and water to protect you and your loved ones.



For more hygiene tips, visit go.gov.sg/keephandsclean

Have questions on whether your child can get vaccinated against Covid-19?



To learn more about child vaccination against COVID, [click here.](#)



you've g  t this!

For more parent resources, please visit ParentHub
at go.gov.sg/parenthub-prisch



<https://go.gov.sg/parenthub-prisch>