

Convenience Food Frenzy!

Take a look at the nutrient content of popular kids' lunch choices.
Consider the healthy alternative.....

MAIN COURSES

PRODUCT	FAT & SALT	HEALTHY ALTERNATIVE
instant noodles with powdered soup base	<p>per 85g. package: (average)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 410 calories ▪ 19 grams fat, mostly saturated ▪ 42% of calories come from fat ▪ deep fried in palm oil, which is high in saturated fat ▪ 51% of the soup base is salt ▪ 835 mg to 1171 mg of sodium per package - same as 7 small bags of chips (depends on flavor of soup base) 	<p>If eating them as a snack (like chips):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ high fibre snack crackers ▪ low fat tortilla chips <p>If eating them as a meal like soup:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ home-made soup with pasta and vegetables
"Make-Your-Own-Sandwich" packs	<p>per package: (average)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 470 calories ▪ 35g. fat – including 17 g. saturated fat ▪ 22g. carbohydrate ▪ 17g. protein ▪ 1g. fibre ▪ 1670 mg. sodium ▪ 67% of calories come from fat 	<p>Buy a plastic food-saver with compartments. Pack it with high fibre crackers, lean lunch meat, cheese, and vegetables – tomato, lettuce, cucumber, sweet pepper slices.</p>
Frozen Pizza pocket-style	<p>per pocket: (average)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 251 calories ▪ 11g. fat - including 11 mg cholesterol ▪ 0.5 mg. trans fat ▪ 550 mg. sodium ▪ 39% of calories come from fat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pizza ingredients stuffed in pita bread or tortilla, - heat in microwave to melt the cheese
macaroni & powdered cheese (in a box)	<p>per serving (1/4 box) when prepared by directions on box:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 274 calories ▪ 9.5g. fat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ home-made macaroni & cheese made with unprocessed cheddar

DRINKS

PRODUCT	SUGAR	HEALTHY ALTERNATIVE
juice boxes	<p>Lots!!! (specific amount depends on brand)</p> <p>If they are "punch", "cocktail", or "drink" (and not 100% pure fruit juice), they may have no more than 10% real fruit juice and are loaded with sugar.</p> <p>May claim something like "vitamins B1 and C added" - but each only contains 15% of the recommended daily intake for vitamin B1.</p> <p>First ingredients in the ingredient list may be "sugar" or "water" - not a lot of nutrition here.</p>	<p>Pour 100% pure fruit juice in small plastic bottles – can even add a little bit of cranberry or other bright colored juice to orange juice to change the color and make it more appealing!</p>

SNACKS & TREATS

PRODUCT	FAT & SUGAR	HEALTHY ALTERNATIVE
Cookies dunked in icing	<p>1st four ingredients of frosting are "sugar, vegetable oil shortening, water, corn syrup"</p> <p>Cookie contains "enriched flour, sugar, hydrogenated vegetable oil, honey, graham flour, corn, corn syrup..."</p> <p>Lots of artery clogging hydrogenated fat.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ home-made oatmeal cookies dipped in vanilla or fruit flavored yogurt
chewy fruit rolls	<p>each roll: (average)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 53 calories ▪ 12g. carbohydrate, mostly from sugar <p>First ingredients in the ingredient list may be a form of sugar - you will know this by words that end in "ose".</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ fresh fruit or fruit salad ▪ fruit leathers, which have more fibre

toaster strudel	<p>per pastry with icing: (average)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 187 calories ▪ 8.1g. fat ▪ 39% of calories from fat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ french toast or pancakes – make the night before and heat quickly in the toaster; or make a large batch one day and store in the freezer – toast when needed!
toaster pastry/tarts	<p>per pastry: (average)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 200 calories ▪ 5.4g. fat ▪ 16g. sugars <p>First ingredients in the ingredient list may be a form of sugar - you will know this by words that end in "ose".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 190 mg. sodium per pastry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ french toast or pancakes re-heated in the toaster ▪ top with yogurt and/or applesauce, or whatever fruit does the trick!
mini-cracker and cheese sandwich snacks	<p>each serving about 10 crackers (25g.): (average)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 135 calories ▪ 8.3 g. fat - including 1.9 grams of saturated fat, and 2.6 grams of trans fat <p>Lots of artery clogging saturated and trans fat</p> <p>55% of calories from fat</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ unprocessed cheddar sandwiched between whole wheat crackers

Remember....

- It is often the fancy packaging and compartments of convenience foods that kids like. Try packing healthier foods in fun packages – it may make all the difference in the world as to whether your child accepts the new, healthier option.
- We may think that children are OK to eat lots of these high fat snacks if there is no noticeable “problem” with their weight. However, the types of foods we eat can be unhealthy, no matter what we weigh. Over the long term, saturated fats and trans fat are damaging to the heart and arteries, even for children and thin people. Body size does not indicate how healthy a person is.
- Sugars supply mostly calories without a lot of nutrients.
- Saturated fat, hydrogenated fat, and trans fat are not healthy for our heart – high amounts in the diet can contribute to high cholesterol levels and clogged arteries.

For more information on healthy meal and snack foods for kids, contact the Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark District Health Unit's Health Action Line at 1-800-660-5853 (345-5685) and ask to speak to a Registered Dietitian.

Developed and distributed by the Leeds, Grenville, and Lanark District Health Unit. September, 2001