

How to spoil grandchildren without overdoing it!

Australia is the world's most overweight nation, ahead of the super-sized Americans. Nutrition surveys over the past 20 years have clearly established we are eating more Calories than we used to. In fact, children have increased their calorie intake by over 200 calories a day. If this extra 200 calories is stored as body fat, this can result in a whopping 10kg of extra body fat in a year.



There is clear evidence that the larger the serving size, the more we eat. What was once acceptable as a snack is now approaching the calories in an entire meal. 20 years ago, a Mars Bar weighed 30grams and contained 135 calories, and we were happy. Today the king size weighs 80grams and contains 370 calories. And we have fallen for it. It's time for us to put food serves back into perspective.

Here is how to spoil your grandkids without spoiling their health.

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Everyday snacks suitable for children, each with 100 calories:

1 cup fruit salad in the bowl

An apple

Fruit juice or Popper, 250ml

1 box sultanas, 40g

100g Ski D'Lite yoghurt tub

Mainland On The Go Light Cheese, 30g

Uncle Tobys Crunchy muesli bar

Individual bag of Movietime popcorn, 20g

35g fruit cake

Occasional choices for children's snacks:

Mini packet of Arnott's Shapes

Mini packet of potato crisps

1 Arnott's Tim Tam

1 mini muffin

The Natural Confectionery Company packet of mini dinosaur lollies, 22g

1 Cadbury Freddo Frog

1 Kellogg's K-time Twist

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Most of us usually eat the entire pack because it looks like a single serve, but this could be too much for our energy needs. A single serve should contain 100 Calories for weight loss and 200 Calories for weight maintenance for Australian men, women and children.

There are many food brands that do provide snacks in the right portion sizes, packaged in single serves and we really congratulate them for helping us eat the right amount. Here are some examples of snacks packaged in suitable serving sizes versus those that are too much:

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Snack food	Too much...	Just right...
Tetrapak drinks	Flavoured milk tetrapaks 250ml, 212 Cals	Most juice tetrapaks 250ml, 128 Cals
Potato crisps	Red Rock Deli Potato Chips 90g 436 Cals	Smiths 20 pack 19g each, 97 Cals
Chocolate	Cadbury Boost mini bites 70g, 390 Cals	Milky Way Bar 25g, 111 Cals

Yoghurts	Gippsland Dairy yoghurt , mango and passionfruit twist, 94% fat free, 300g, 480 Cals	Vaalia, 12 pack 100g each, 102 Cals
Muesli bars	All Natural Bakers Organic Oat Slice 100g, 428 Cals	Be Natural Trail Bars 32g, 118 Cals
Dairy desserts	Homer Hudsons' Hot Chocolate Love Tarts 120g, 451 Cals	Nestle Diet choc mousse 95g, 86 Cals
Ice creams	Magnum Ego, caramel 112g, 399 Cals	Paddle pop, caramel 68g, 101 Cals
Cheese and cracker snacks	DIY snack pack, ham and tasty 100g, 345 Cals	Mainland, On the Go Light, 4-pack 30g each, 109 Cals
Desserts	Aunty Betty's Light Fruit Steamed Pudding 125g, 300 Cals	Foster Clark's Custard Cups 140g, 134 Cals
Soft drinks	Kirk's lemonade 375ml can, 171 Cals	Sprite 200ml can, 84 Cals
Cake mixes	White Wings Triple Choc muffins 70g, 269 Cals	Greens Choc Truffle Cupcakes 33g, 113 Cals

Educating children about healthy eating habits is part of the solution to curbing our growing obesity problem. The fact is we have probably reached our maximum life expectancy potential, and even with the best medical care, our children may live shorter lives than ourselves.

Obesity statistics tell us the 55 to 64 age group had the highest combined rates of overweight and obesity with 72 percent of males and 58 percent of females. As baby boomers, we have arrived in the age group of most importance to our health and quality of life. This is when heart problems, diabetes and cancers take hold.

The basis of a healthy life comes down to eating, exercise and psychological health. Knowing your correct serving size can help you make more informed decisions about how much to eat, and keep you on track if you want to lose or maintain weight.

By Amanda Clark

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