

Ask the expert

"I live on my own and over the last few months my weight has increased. My downfall is eating sweets or chocolates when watching TV. Can you advise on healthy snacks?"

Marjory from Te Puke

Siobhan says... a balanced approach to snacking is important.



Many people feel guilty about eating between meals believing that all snack foods are bad for us. The fact is that snacking is totally normal and an acceptable part of everyone's diet. Snacks make a valuable contribution to our overall nutrient intake, the right choice of snack foods can help us to reach our daily vitamin and mineral requirements.

If your favourite snacks tend to be sweets and chocolates then a balanced approach is needed. Shopping for snacks should be just the same as other food shopping, think about what you want in advance, write a list and stick to it. If you have fruit and crackers in the pantry instead of chocolate and sweets, that's what you will choose first when you want a snack.

Ideal snack choices for people wanting to watch their weight include; dried fruit and seeds; home-made popcorn; vegetable sticks e.g. carrot, cucumber, celery; wholemeal crackers; mini muffin with fruit such as blueberry; lower fat biscuits such as arrowroot; low fat yoghurt. Take advantage of the wide variety of fruit available at this time of year. Look for roadside bargains which are often cheaper than in the shops. Apples, bananas, nectarines, melon and grapes are an ideal snack.

Snack tips:

- Remember that snacks are smaller than meals, so watch the portion size!
- Plan your snacks at regular intervals and stick to them, rather than grazing all day
- Plan ahead and make sure your cupboard has a range of snacks from the list above

Questions?

Do you have a question about a particular food or meal, or want to know how to make healthy choices for you and your family? Send a question to Siobhan Miller, a nutrition expert working for Toi Te Ora - Public Health.



Email your question to Siobhan at heha@bopdhb.govt.nz or post your question to:

BOPDHB Communications Team
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Nutrition key to fitness



Tracey Ngatoko of Te Kapa Haka o Ngati Ranginui samples the healthy food prepared as part of their nutrition education course with HEHA community educator Stephen Cameron.

Thirty seven years after it began, Te Matatini National Kapa Haka Festival will be hosted by Tauranga for the first time next month. The February 19-22 event is expected to attract more than 40,000 visitors to Baypark Stadium.

Members of the area's only competing group are preparing to compete as well as host the event.

"The pressure is certainly on. This is one of the biggest profile events our Iwi has been involved in," said Te Kapa Haka o Ngati Ranginui committee member and performer Charlie Rahiri. "We're the second group on stage and one of our waiata-a-ringa (action songs) welcomes visitors to Tauranga. Following our performance we all rush off and support behind the scenes."

Te Kapa Haka o Ngati Ranginui is made up of 40 performers aged between 14 and 55 and they know that the competition will be fierce. They are up against 34 teams from across New Zealand and two teams from Australia. For Ngati Ranginui, the festival is particularly significant.

"Ngati Ranginui Iwi for a time became embraced under the mana of one Iwi. It's only in the last 30-40 years that there has been a reaffirmation of Ngati Ranginui Iwi's existence," says committee member Sylvia Willison. "The design on our costumes tells the story of the Iwi and the hapu subtribes. Each member of the group is responsible for completing their own costumes, which involves tapestry work. This is part of our mental preparation and even the men find it very therapeutic."

The group has been preparing for the event since they got through the

regional competition in March 2008.

"It's a big commitment for all the members," says Sylvia. "We practise every Monday evening and since November there has been a noho every weekend, where we all stay at the marae."

As part of the noho, the group has enlisted the help of Bay of Plenty District Health Board community educator Stephen Cameron who delivers health education programmes focusing on nutrition and physical activity. "Kapa Haka is extremely physical," says Charlie who has been a member of the group for the last two years. "Performing is mentally and physically draining so you need to be fit to be able to compete. Nutrition is key to fitness so it's been great having Stephen on board to help us - hopefully it will give us an advantage!"

Sylvia says that throughout the festival, the national committee in collaboration with Baypark stadium staff will reinforce healthy lifestyle messages and have ensured that healthy food and drink options are available for visitors and performers.

"We have managed to minimise the number of fast food outlets and ensure that lots of water is available. There will be traditional Maori food sold from various stalls which will be stationed in the large car park area of the stadium," she says.

HEHA for health

Healthy Eating Healthy Action (HEHA) is a Ministry of Health campaign to improve nutrition and increase our physical activity. It is a joint approach between the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC). A variety of projects to meet these goals are going on in the Bay of Plenty. For more information about HEHA visit www.bopdhb.govt.nz and click on the HEHA logo.



Simple steps to healthy living



Healthy eating is...

...using healthy options to boost the flavour of everyday foods.

Instead of adding butter to mashed potato, add a little trim milk, light sour cream and ground pepper. Instead of butter on sandwiches, choose a low-fat tasty spread such as hummus, mustard or chutney. They will be just as tasty with much less fat. Trim the fat off meat and don't add salt to cooking. Instead use other flavourings such as fresh or dried herbs, or garlic. Garlic is full of antioxidants to boost the immune system and fight 'bad' cholesterol.



...trying out new ideas for dessert.

Banana is sumptuously creamy when frozen. Just peel, cover with plastic wrap and pop in the freezer overnight. Chop and sprinkle with cinnamon, a dollop of frozen yoghurt or some Milo - yummy, healthy and cheap! Source: Healthy Food Guide www.healthyfood.co.nz



Healthy action is...

...asking your doctor for a green prescription.

A green prescription is a health professional's written advice to a patient to be physically active, as part of the patient's health management. SPARC (Sport and Recreation New Zealand) surveyed 2500 green prescription patients and found that more than eight months after receiving their prescription, 48 per cent of patients are still more active than they were before. Call 0800 ACTIVE (0800 228 483) for more information. Source: Healthy Food Guide www.healthyfood.co.nz



...improving the quality of your sleep.

Sleeping well can improve your concentration, your mood and your overall health. Regular exercise improves your quality of sleep, reduces stress and anxiety levels, making it easier to sleep. Sport BOP has lots of ideas for getting started with regular exercise as well as events taking place throughout the Bay of Plenty. Visit www.sportbop.co.nz.

