

*“My kids just love their hot chips and it’s nice to give them a treat every now and then, but how can I make sure they are getting the healthiest option?”*

*Jane, Whakatane.*

**Siobhan says... fried foods should always be considered ‘occasional’ food**

You are right to think about healthy options for your kids. Children learn by example and develop lifelong eating habits from their parents and the foods they eat as a child. At home, frying should be kept to a minimum. While eating too many chips is not part of a healthy diet, the way that they are cooked can have an effect on the overall fat content of your diet. Try using better oils such as rice bran oil, olive oil, sunflower oil or canola oil rather than beef fat or lard. Even though these are better types of oils remember to only use very small amounts as they are still high in fat. Remember that fried foods should always be considered an ‘occasional’ food whatever they are cooked in.

Did you know that New Zealanders eat 120,000 tons of chips every year? Next time you buy chips from a take away ask if they have been cooked according to the Chip Group guidelines. The takeaway may have a poster or window sticker to show that it supports this initiative. The fat content of hot chips can be significantly reduced if they are cooked according to guidelines developed by the Chip Group called the Best Practice Frying Project. For example, the size of the chip is important. Skinny chips have more surface area and absorb more fat than thicker cut chunky chips. The type and temperature of the oil is important as well as the length of time they are fried. Research also shows that consumers prefer the taste of chips when they are cooked to these standards. It has been estimated that frying chips to this standard will cut out 2,500 tons of fat from the nation’s diet.

More information can be found at [www.chipgroup.co.nz](http://www.chipgroup.co.nz)