



Unit 4 Sugar: Parent Extension

Hi, this is Shanita with the Montgomery County Office of Public Health.

Unit 4 of our 123 a Healthy Me is all about sugar. In this unit we teach kids that sugary snacks should be eaten in moderation. While kids may not fully understand why, we as adults know that excess sugar can lead to cavities, obesity and changes in our mood.

It's up to the caregivers to limit and monitor the amount of sugar kids are consuming. Some things are more obvious with how much sugar they have such as candy, cookies and ice cream. Most of us know that these things should be limited. However, it's the foods with hidden sugars that can trick us. That's what I want to talk to you about today.

Many cereals targeted toward kids have loads of added sugar. Those cereals can be served occasionally as a treat but a child's breakfast should be a healthy and filling meal that includes things like whole grains, fruit and milk or a dairy alternative.

Yogurts are another type of food that tend to have lots of hidden sugar in them. A good way to know if an item is high in sugar or not is to take a look at the nutrition facts label on the package. Scroll down to the section where it states added sugar. Twenty percent or higher is considered a lot. While 5% or lower is quite low.

Instead of a sugary flavored yogurt for your kids, try buying a plain yogurt and adding in fruit and granola for sweetness and crunch.

Lastly, let's talk about drinks! We all know that kids love juice, but this should be limited. Even the juices marketed as 100% juice! While they don't have added sugar, they can still add in unwanted calories very easily if consumed everyday throughout each meal. Juice also takes away the fiber of eating whole fruit.

We want to encourage you to choose water and low-fat milk first. Be sure to check out the nutrition facts label handout that we have provided.

Always remember- be healthy, have fun and stay safe!