

Active Kids – At School

Week 6: Sometimes foods

Why are “sometimes foods” unhealthy?

Healthy kids should limit the amount of “sometimes foods and drinks” they consume. These foods do not provide the nutrients your body needs for growth and development.

“Sometimes foods” are usually processed foods which may contain trans fats, added sugar and refined grains. These include chips, fried foods, sugary biscuits, and soft drinks.

Trans fats: These fats occur when vegetable oils are chemically altered to stay solid at room temperature, which gives them a much longer shelf life. Artificial trans fats are linked to long-term inflammation, insulin resistance, and type 2 diabetes, especially for people with obesity or excess weight.

Refined grains: refined carbs are also known as simple carbs or processed carbs. There are two main types:

- **Sugars:** Refined and processed sugars, such as sucrose (Table sugar), high fructose corn syrup and agave syrup.
- **Refined grains:** These are grains that have had the fibrous and nutritious parts removed. The biggest source is white flour made from refined wheat.

Refined carbs have been stripped of almost all fibre, vitamins and minerals. For this reason, they can be considered as “empty” calories. They are also digested quickly and have a high glycaemic index. This means that they lead to rapid spikes in blood sugar and insulin levels after meals. Eating foods high on the glycaemic index has been linked to overeating and increased risk of many diseases. The main dietary sources of refined carbs are white flour, white bread, white rice, pastries, sodas, snacks, pasta, sweets, breakfast cereals and added sugars.

Soft Drinks and artificially flavoured drinks are usually very high in sugar and considered “sometimes drinks”. The [Australian Dietary Guidelines](#) do not recommend the consumption of sugar sweetened drinks such as soft drinks, cordials, fruit drinks, vitamin-style waters, flavoured mineral waters, energy and sports drinks. Instead, encourage and support children to drink water throughout the day – this will help to balance their energy and keep their bodies hydrated the healthy way.

Class activity: Alternatives to “sometimes foods”

In this week’s class activity get students to brainstorm and identify the ‘sometimes foods and drinks’ that we know best – use a white board or get them to write these down.

After a few minutes, then ask students to list a healthy alternative for each of the listed ‘sometimes foods and drinks’. Below are some suggestions to get the discussion started.

Sometimes Food	Healthy alternative
Potato chips	Kale chips
French fries	Baked Veggies fries
Candy	Chocolate-dipped nuts
Soda	Fruity sparkling water
Burgers	Burgers without the bun (homemade patties)
Fried chicken wings	Baked chicken wings
Spaghetti	Zucchini strings