

Letters to Parents



衛生署

Department of Health

Happy Chinese New Year for Kids

The Chinese New Year is coming! Most parents cannot wait to give their children a big "red pocket" as a greeting of a start of the New Year to wish them healthy and clever. However, it is ironic that you provide them with deep-fried, salty or sugary snacks when you are blessing your children! As parents, if you want your children to have a healthy Chinese New Year, more effort should be made to help them cultivate a healthy eating habit. Why don't you use this special occasion to reshape the eating habit of your family to show your care?

A New Face of Chinese New Year Candy Box

While visiting relatives, children are easily tempted by the candy box that filled with sugary and fatty snacks when their parents are not paying attention. Over-consumption of these snacks will not only affect their appetite for main meals but also do harm on their health. As a host, you can consider some healthy snacks to replace those unhealthy ones to make your guests happy and healthy.

Traditional Chinese New Year Candy Box	Traditional Chinese New Year Candy Box
Candied lotus seeds and melons, Candied lotus roots and shredded coconut slices Chocolates and candies Red and black melon seeds Deep-fried snack (e.g. crispy triangles, sesame balls)	Dried fruits without added sugar (e.g. dried apricots, raisins, prunes and dried apples) Seeds (e.g. sunflower seeds or pumpkin seeds) Plain rice cakes and crackers, Dry-roasted plain nuts

On the other hand, we do not visit relatives with empty hands. Gifts are also important for Chinese greeting. Don't forget to choose wisely for healthy gifts.

Traditional Gifts	Healthy Gifts
Cookies Egg roll cookies Candies, chocolate Salted nuts Gourmet sauce gift set	Nuts without added salt Dried mushrooms and dried scallop gift boxes Fruit baskets Non-fried noodles gift boxes Flowers and gifts other than food

Letters to Parents



衛生署

Department of Health

Family Reunion Dinner/ New Year Feast

People usually consume more meat than vegetables and dishes with strong flavour in this special occasion. This will insensibly make them over-consume fat, salt and sugar. Perhaps parents can start with following the healthy eating rules while preparing the Family Reunion Dinner and New Year Feast, so that healthy eating principles can be carried out in your family.

- * Always remind yourself with the '321' healthy eating rule. A meal should provide grains, vegetables and meat (and its alternatives) in the ratio of 3:2:1 by volume. You may refer to the [“Nutritional Guidelines on Lunch for Students”](#) of the Department of Health for the recommended quantity of a child's meal.
- * Reduce using ingredients that are high in fat, e.g. pork belly, ribs, poultry with skin, pork feet and chicken feet.
- * Avoid using preserved and processed meat e.g. Chinese cured sausage and salty fish.
- * Choose moderate amount of fish, seafood or skinless chicken.
- * Use less salt and sugar when you cook. Use more natural and fresh spices, including coriander, garlic, ginger, spring onion, fresh lemon juice, pepper or star anise.
- * Use healthier cooking methods, such as steaming, stewing, braising, roasting, boiling and stir-frying with little amount of oil to replace pan-frying and deep-frying in which a lot of oil may be used.
- * Choose tofu, soy bean curd, fresh beancurd sheet or dry bean to replace deep-fried soy products (e.g. deep-fried soybean curd) when preparing vegetarian dishes.
- * Introduce a variety of vegetables into dishes to enhance the flavour and texture of the dishes and increase dietary fibre content. Many children like broccoli, gourds, mushrooms, tomatoes, carrots and corn. Dark leafy green vegetables, such as broccoli and choy sum are rich in calcium, which helps children's development and growth.
- * Choose whole grains and grains with added vegetables that are high in dietary fibre, such as red rice, multi-grains rice, rice with chopped vegetables, corn or pumpkin.
- * Choose vegetables, lean meat or skinless poultry to prepare clear soups, e.g. winter melon soup. Remember to remove excess oil from the soup surface before serving.
- * Encourage children to drink water or clear soup instead of sugary drinks, such as soft drinks and prepackaged drinks.
- * Serve fresh fruit as dessert after meal. It does not only help to replenish water but also boost your children's dietary fibre intake.

Letters to Parents



Healthy Tips for Chinese Cakes

- * Do not to use New Year cakes (e.g. sweetened rice cakes, turnip cakes and taro cakes) and deep-fried snack food to replace main meals. Snacks and main meals should be at least 1.5-2 hours apart.
- * Avoid using too much sugar or processed meat for making the New Year cakes.
- * Use a smaller container to hold food to control the amount we eat.
- * Use steaming or baking as a healthier cooking and reheating method. If you prefer pan-frying, steam the cakes first until half-done and then lightly fry with little vegetable oil (exclude margarine, palm oil and coconut oil). Try to discard excess oil on the surface before serving.
- * Avoid adding excess chili sauce and other sauces when eating the New Year cakes.
- * Remember to eat at least 2 servings of fruit and 3 servings of vegetables daily during the festival. New Year cakes and snacks should not be over consumed and affect our intake of fruit and vegetables.
- * Provide water, clear soup, low-sugar soymilk or low-fat milk if your children feel thirsty.

