



Youngest children get more snacks

Scientific evidence has now been provided for what many have long suspected: youngest children get spoiled more with unhealthy snacks. This finding comes from doctoral research by Femke Brouwer at Food Quality and Design.

‘More and more children are overweight,’ says Brouwer. ‘To ensure that mothers make healthy choices for their children, it’s important to find out what their motives are.’

Brouwer asked 136 Dutch mothers of children between two and seven years old what they feed their children and why. ‘With their first child, mothers are far more conscientious. They want to do the right thing. They follow advice meticulously and buy products designed for the appropriate age group, such as toddler-cookies.’ Mothers are more relaxed with their second or third child. Brouwer:

‘In the words of one mother: “The others have survived alright”. Also, the youngest often eats the same snacks as the older sibling. And with older children in the home, there are more kinds of snacks than just raisins.’

Behaviour

The mothers’ different behaviour with younger and older children may explain why the youngest is more often overweight. Brouwer feels these findings may be of use to health organizations in designing campaigns. And to producers in developing healthier snacks. TL

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Femke Brouwer, Food Quality and Design