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NEWS RELEASE

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Where's the Fruit?

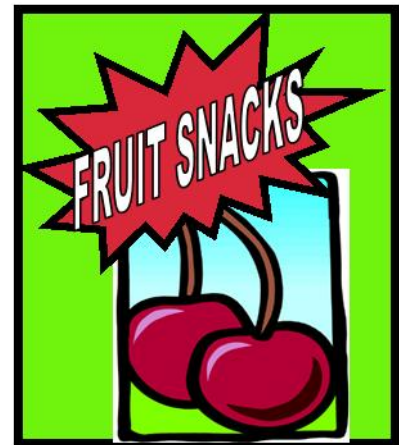
Processed fruit snacks have fruit in them, right? Or do they? Do they count as a serving of fruit for the day? Children everywhere seem to love these little fruit snacks.

As fruit snacks and some fruit bars are promoted as containing real fruit ingredients and flavors in them, they seldom contain actual fruit. The brightly packaged and kid-friendly snacks are not a substitute for the real thing.

Eating these processed fruits is like eating candy. They consist mainly of sugar. Even if the snack is proclaiming they are made with real fruit juice, the real fruit juice is often a very small amount of concentrated grape or apple juice. The juice is not providing any fiber or the vitamins and minerals naturally found in real fruit – fresh, frozen or canned. Fruit juice snacks can contain up to 20 grams of added sugar per serving or more. That's 5 teaspoons of sugar! Some of these sugary fruit snacks are even marketed to babies as fruit treats. In addition to providing very little nutrients, the sticky consistency of the snacks can lead to dental carries.

With school just around the corner, don't be tempted to buy these fruit snacks to put in your child's lunch. Fruit roll-ups, fruit bars, and fruit snacks do not compare to real fruit. The USDA's MyPyramid recommends that children have 1½ to 2 cups of fruit each day. One cup of fruit is equivalent to one medium-size apple, one medium-size banana or 8 strawberries.

Want to know more ways to add fruit to children's lunches or more information on fruit? Contact the UCCE's Nutrition BEST Program at (530) 889-7350 or visit us at ceplacer.ucdavis.edu. Parents and child care providers can learn more about eating healthy and healthy snacks for young children through the Nutrition BEST program.



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