

Combo-snacks of cheese and vegetables cut kids calories

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Want your children to be healthier snackers? A new Cornell study finds that serving children combined snacks of vegetables and cheese led them to eat 72 percent fewer calories—and be just as satisfied as those who were served only potato chips.

"[Snack](#) combos are fun to eat, and they take longer to eat than [potato chips](#). This is why kids find them satisfying and why they eat so much less," said Brian Wansink, professor of marketing at the Charles H. Dyson School of [Applied Economics](#) and Management at Cornell University. In the forthcoming *Pediatrics* study, 201 elementary school students were given all of the potato chips, vegetables, cheese, or vegetables-and-cheese they wanted while watching an hour of television. Those given the cheese-vegetable combo ate 72 percent fewer calories than those given chips. This result was even stronger for heavier children.

Wansink and his co-authors, Cornell researchers Mitsuru Shimizu and Adam Brumberg, also found that children reported being just as satisfied after eating a vegetable-and-cheese snack as they did after eating chips. "That is really the key take-away—that you can substitute the healthier snack without a total rebellion on the kids' part," Brumberg said.

"This was inspired by the White House's 'Let's Move' program to encourage healthier eating," said Wansink. The paper, "Association of Nutrient-Dense Snack Combinations With Calories and [Vegetable Intake](#)," is posted online in the journal, *Pediatrics*, and forthcoming in January.

It was sponsored by Bell Brands of cheese, which were the single-served wheels and wedges used in study.

"There is no magic food or ingredient that will end [childhood obesity](#), but learning to substitute certain foods—such as choosing a combination snack of vegetables and cheese instead of potato chips or sweets—can be an effective tool to induce children to reduce their [caloric intake](#) while snacking," Wansink said. "What's cool is this worked best for the heaviest, pickiest kids. Its fun to eat and it makes snack time last longer."

Provided by Cornell Food & Brand Lab

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