

Don't let sweet treats leave a sour taste this Easter

March 23 2015, by Amanda Weaver



Charlotte and Billy Bruce get excited about a healthy Easter basket

Waking to a chocolate egg or two on Easter Sunday is a pleasure most children look forward to, but parents are advised to be moderate and not shower kids with a mountain of chocolate they will be eating for weeks to come.

Dr Helen Vidgen, Senior Research Fellow from QUT's School of Exercise and Nutrition Sciences which runs the Queensland Government funded [PEACH](#) program, promoting healthy weight in children, said some [parents](#) and [grandparents](#) go overboard with the sweet Easter treats.

"The 2011/12 National Nutrition Survey revealed that Australian kids on average get almost 40% of their daily energy intake from junk food or food that falls outside the core food groups," Dr Vidgen said.

"Given this statistic and the fact that one in four Queensland children are above the healthy weight range, it's a good idea for families to give some thought into the kind of experience they create for their children at Easter time.

"I am not saying don't give kids treats at Easter or to swap carrot sticks for chocolate eggs but it is possible to give children a magical Easter experience without giving them a mountain of Easter eggs.

"It's about thinking a little differently and surprising them in ways they perhaps won't expect, which will make the chocolate treat they do receive that extra bit special.

"For most kids the appeal of a treat gets lost when they are presented with lots of it. A treat is meant to be occasional; not every day and unfortunately Easter eggs start appearing in the shops straight after Christmas."

Dr Vidgen has the following top tips for a healthier Easter:

1. Tweak the Easter egg hunt - instead of trailing only chocolate eggs mix it up with trinkets such as fruity flavoured lip gloss, scented pens or pencils, sparkly hair ties, matchbox cars, stickers or bouncy balls. Or for older kids do a hunt with clues that lead to a larger surprise.
2. Quality over quantity - for example individually select handmade chocolates with special meaning for your child like animal shapes, their favourite ingredient or flavour combination. Encourage your child to take their time and savour the flavour

and the artistry of chocolate.

3. DIY chocolate egg kit - give kids a DIY chocolate egg making kit or plastic mould available from craft shops and help them make their own Easter eggs. It's a fun way to spend time with kids in the kitchen.
4. Non-food gifts - toys like plaster dinosaur eggs are fun for kids and being eggs are still loosely related to Easter. Other ideas include bunny slippers, bunny ears and egg cups.
5. Chocolate covered fruit - get kids to help make a platter of fruit such as strawberries or banana pieces dipped in a variety of milk, dark and white chocolate.
6. Dye and decorate boiled eggs - in many cultures boiled eggs are dyed bright colours and then painted or decorated. This is a fun, crafty activity for [kids](#) and makes a nice centrepiece for the dining table.
7. Donate to charity - if you find your children have been given an excess of [chocolate](#) eggs consider donating some to a charity for families who can't afford such treats.
8. Fill your own plastic eggs - colourful plastic eggs are available from craft shops that can be filled with either healthier treats or even loose change for money boxes.

Families who are taking part in the PEACH (Parenting, Eating and Activity for Child Health) program funded by the Queensland Government are offered advice about how to maintain a healthy balance during Easter.

The PEACH program is free for families with a child aged between 5-11 years who is above the [healthy weight](#) range. Registrations are now open for new groups to start across the state in term two in late April.

More information: Families can register for the PEACH program at www.peachqld.com.au or 1800 263 519.

Provided by Queensland University of Technology

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