

Healthier in summer?

In theory, we find it easier to eat more healthily in the summer. Warmer weather makes salads and fresh fruit a good option and BBQed fish and lean meats with salads are a great choice for a healthy dinner. However, some of our favourite summer foods can be full of sugar or fat and a recent study showed that kids gained weight three times more quickly during the summer than the rest of the year, due to poor food choices and more free time spent indoors on electronics. While it is fine to have treats sometimes, having them every day or more often can cause health and weight issues.

What about ice cream?

Research published by Checkout magazine showed that almost ¼ of Irish consumers buy ice cream once per week. Ice cream was traditionally made with cream, a little sugar and usually eggs and fruit – still a treat, but made with fresh, natural ingredients. Now it is much more common to find vegetables oils, water, emulsifiers and flavours on the ingredient list instead. If a product is labelled ‘dairy ice cream’, it cannot contain any vegetable fat and there are some fantastic artisan ice cream producers. However, if it is just labelled ice cream, like most commercial varieties, then it is only required to contain 2.5% milk protein.

Some healthier summer treats

- Berries, peach slices or other fruit. Stick different fruit on skewers to look more appealing
- Frozen smoothies – bought or home made
- Fruit slushies made by blending ice, chopped fresh fruit and sparkling water in a blender. Mango with a squeeze of fresh lime is a great choice, as is watermelon with fresh mint
- Frozen grapes or melon balls
- Frozen watermelon ‘ice pops’ – cut watermelon into slices, trim off rind, insert stick and freeze. Watermelon is 90% water and a great source of the antioxidant lycopene.

Healthy probiotic berry ‘ice cream’

400g pack frozen Irish berries*

6 - 8 tbsp. full fat natural yoghurt (or use soya or other non-dairy yoghurt)

Squeeze lime juice (optional)

2 tbsp. good quality fruit jam

1. Place frozen fruit in blender and blend on highest speed until blitzed
2. Add other ingredients and blend until creamy
3. Serve straight away or store in freezer. If freezing, remove from freezer 10 minutes before serving

**NB The Food Safety Authority of Ireland has confirmed that their recommendation to boil any imported frozen berries for 1 minute before eating is still in place due to the risk of Hepatitis A. However, frozen Irish berries or berries that you have bought fresh and frozen at home are safe to use straight from frozen. Find more information on fsai.ie*