

Snacking Smart for Kids

Snacks are important for children

- Children have high energy and nutrient needs for optimal growth and learning. But they also have small stomachs. This means that food from meals alone is often not enough. Additional snacks throughout the day can help children get what they need.
- Snacks should have high nutritional value. They should be low in added sugar and moderate in salt and fat for good health.
- Highly processed snacks are high in added sugar, fat, and salt, and provide little to no nutrition. Try to limit highly processed foods.
- Have planned snack times in between meals, rather than letting children graze, so they come to the table hungry at mealtimes.



How to make a healthy snack

STEP 1: CHOOSE 1 FRUIT OR VEGETABLE

Vegetables and Fruit:

cucumber, peppers, lettuce, cauliflower, broccoli, carrots, snap peas, tomato, orange, apple, pear, melon, kiwi, grapes, berries, banana, frozen or canned fruit

STEP 2: CHOOSE 1 OTHER FOOD

Whole grains:

whole grain/whole wheat: breads, rolls, pita bread, homemade muffins, dry cereal, tortillas, crackers, pasta, rice

Protein:

milk, yogurt, fortified soy beverage, cheese, cooked eggs, leftover chicken or turkey, canned tuna, canned beans, bean dips, chickpeas, hummus, sunflower butter or seeds

SNACK IDEAS

- Cucumber slices topped with sliced cheese or tuna
- Unsweetened applesauce with ½ a whole grain bagel
- Kabobs (cherry tomatoes & mozzarella, grapes & marble cheese)
- Sliced strawberries and bananas rolled up in a whole wheat tortilla
- Vegetables with hummus dip
- Whole wheat crackers with homemade guacamole
- Cheddar cheese and apple slices
- Celery filled with hummus & seeds
- Melon dipped in vanilla yogurt
- Boiled egg, avocado and tomato
- Yogurt parfait with fruit and granola
- Pita pizzas (whole wheat pita bread with tomato sauce, cheese and veggies)
- Baked broccoli cheese egg bites

LIMIT HIGHLY PROCESSED FOODS

These types of foods can be high in added sugar, salt and fat. If you choose these foods, eat them less often and in small amounts.

Examples of highly processed snacks:

- Sugary drinks - fruit punches, cocktails, slushies, iced tea, sports drinks, lemonades, regular and diet pop
- Baked goods - cookies, donuts, pies, brownies, packaged snack cakes
- Deep fried foods - potato chips, nacho chips, French fries, chicken fingers
- Processed cheese slices or spreads
- Confectionaries - chocolate bars, suckers, candy, gummies
- Sugar-coated cereal
- Fruit roll-ups
- Lunchables
- Granola bars

SNACKING TIPS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

- Use reusable BPA-free or glass containers
- Carry a lunch box or cloth bag
- Use inexpensive metal cutlery rather than plastic
- Use a spill-proof thermos for milk or soup
- Use less individually packaged snack foods
- Recycle as much packaging as possible

MAKE WATER THE DRINK OF CHOICE!

Water is the healthiest and best way to quench thirst and stay hydrated. Sugary drinks contribute excess sugar, do not provide nutritional value, and can bump out healthier drink choices.



ENSURE SNACKS ARE AGE APPROPRIATE SO THAT CHILDREN DO NOT CHOKE

The following foods can be choking hazards to children, depending on their age:

- Grapes & cherry tomatoes
- Stringy vegetables (celery), round carrots
- Nuts, seeds, popcorn
- Fruit with pits & seeds, dried fruit (raisins)
- Fruits/vegetables with skin
- Marshmallows, gum, hard & soft candy
- String cheese
- Peanut butter
- Tough meats

WHAT TO DO:

- Cut fruits, vegetables, cheese and meats into small pieces, remove skins and pits from foods, ensure spreads (peanut/nut butter) are thinly spread
- Avoid marshmallows, gum, candies, and nuts/seeds until child is older (over 5)

