

Healthy Snacks

Snacks are a bigger part of kids' diets than in the past. Snacks can make positive or negative contributions to kids' diets – depending on the choices we offer. Next time your children say, “I’m hungry,” or if you need to get them through to the next meal, reach for one of these healthy snacks.



VEGETABLES

Most of the snacks served to children should be fruits and vegetables, since most kids do not eat the recommended five to thirteen servings of fruits and vegetables each day. Popular vegetables that can be served raw with dip or salad dressing include:

- Broccoli
- Baby Carrots
- Celery Sticks
- Cucumber
- Peppers
- Snap Peas
- Snow Peas
- String Beans
- Grape or Cherry Tomatoes
- Yellow Summer Squash
- Zucchini slices

For dips: Try low-fat salad dressings, like fat-free Ranch or Thousand Island, store-bought light dips, bean dips, guacamole, hummus (which comes in dozens of flavors), salsa, or peanut butter

LOW-FAT DAIRY FOODS

Dairy foods are a great source of calcium, which can help to build strong bones. However, dairy products also are the biggest sources of artery-clogging saturated fat in kids' diets. To protect children's bones and hearts, make sure all dairy foods are low-fat or fat-free

- Yogurt
- Lower-Fat Cheese
- Low-fat Pudding and Frozen Yogurt – Serve only as occasional treats because they are high in added sugars

FRUIT

Fruit is naturally sweet, so most kids love it. Fruit can be served whole, sliced, cut in half, cubed, or in wedges. Canned, frozen, and dried fruits often need little preparation.

- Apples
- Apricots
- Bananas
- Blackberries
- Blueberries
- Cantaloupe
- Cherries
- Grapefruit
- Grapes (red, green, or purple)
- Honeydew Melon
- Kiwis
- Mandarin Oranges
- Mangoes
- Nectarines
- Oranges
- Peaches
- Pears
- Pineapple
- Plums
- Raspberries
- Strawberries
- Tangerines
- Watermelon

Other popular fruit forms:

- Applesauce (Unsweetened), Fruit Cups, and Canned Fruit
- Dried Fruit – Try raisins, apricots, apples, cranberries, and fruit leathers with little or no added sugars
- Frozen fruit
- Fruit Salad – Get kids to help make a fruit salad
- Popsicles – Look for popsicles made from 100% fruit juice with no added caloric sweeteners

HEALTHY GRAINS

Try to serve mostly whole grains, which provide more fiber, vitamins, and minerals than refined grains.

- Whole Wheat English Muffins, Pita, or Tortillas
- Breakfast Cereal – Either dry or with low-fat milk, *whole* grain cereals like Cheerios, Grape-Nuts, Raisin Bran, Frosted Mini Wheats, and Wheaties make good snacks. Look for cereals with no more than about 8 grams of sugar per serving
- Whole grain crackers like Triscuits
- Rice Cakes
- Popcorn
- Baked Tortilla Chips
- Granola and Cereal Bars – Look for whole grain granola bars that are low in fat and sugars
- Pretzels, Breadsticks, and Flatbreads – These low-fat items can be offered as snacks now *and* then. However, most of these snacks are not whole grain and most pretzels are high in salt

IMPORTANT! Water should be the main drink served to kids at snack times. Water satisfies thirst and does not have sugar or calories. (Plus, it is low-cost!) If kids are used to getting sweetened beverages at snack times, it may take a little time for them to get used to drinking water.