

# Healthy Snacks for Kids

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 says, "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 salad dressings such as non-fat 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 nonfat.

- Yogurt
- Lower fat cheese
- Low fat pudding and frozen yogurt – Serve only as occasional treats because they are high in added sugars.

## 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 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.

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# Healthy Kids' Snacks (*continued*)

## Fruits

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
- Kiwifruit
- Mandarin oranges
- Mangoes
- Nectarines
- Oranges
- Peaches
- Pears
- Pineapple
- Plums
- Raspberries
- Strawberries
- Tangerines
- Watermelon

### **Other popular fruit forms:**

- Applesauce (unsweetened), fruit cups, and canned fruits
- 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.

## 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 time for them to get used to drinking water.**

