

Tasty Snacks For Healthy Kids

Some Preparation Required:

- **Veggies & Dip:** baby carrots, cucumber slices, red pepper slices, chopped broccoli, cherry tomatoes, or celery sticks served with hummus, low-fat salad dressing, or other low-fat dip
- **Vegetable Sticks with Spread:** celery or carrot sticks with 2 tablespoons peanut butter or low-fat cream cheese
- **Snack Kabobs:** veggie or fruit chunks skewered onto thin pretzel sticks
- **Sweet Potato Fries:** baked sweet potato wedges, tossed lightly with olive oil and salt
- **Low-Fat Cottage Cheese or Yogurt with Fruit and/or Granola:** try using fresh grapes, berries, or canned peaches
- **Apple Treats:** sprinkle apple chunks with cinnamon and/or raisins or granola, then mix in 1 tablespoon peanut or almond butter
- **Homemade Popsicles:** made with 100% fruit juice or low-fat yogurt
- **Chips & Salsa:** use whole grain baked pita chips or baked tortilla chips; also try chips with low-fat bean dip
- **Taco Roll-up:** small whole wheat tortilla rolled with low-fat cheese, beans & salsa
- **Turkey Roll-up:** lean turkey slice rolled up with low-fat cheese
- **Mini Pizzas:** toast pita bread or half of a whole wheat English muffin with tomato sauce, cheese, and chopped vegetables
- **Mini Bagel with Spread:** try 1 tablespoon light cream cheese, peanut butter, or hummus
- **Mini Sandwiches:** use 1 slice whole wheat bread, pita bread, or several whole grain crackers; fill or top with peanut butter & jelly, low-fat cheese & cucumber slices, or tuna salad made with low-fat mayonnaise

No Prep Needed:

- **Whole Fruit:** grapes, apples, bananas, etc.
- **Fruit Salad:** 1/2 cup store-bought, fresh fruit, unsweetened canned fruit, or snack cup
- **Frozen Fruit:** 1/2 cup berries, etc.
- **Dried Fruit:** 1/3 cup
- **Apple Sauce:** 1 snack cup (unsweetened)
- **Nuts:** 1/3 cup of nuts such as almonds, peanuts, cashews, or mixed nuts
- **Cheese:** low-fat string cheese, or 2 slices low-fat cheese
- **Yogurt:** 1 squeezable low-fat yogurt or 1 low-fat yogurt container (6 oz.)
- **Pudding:** 1 non-fat or low-fat snack cup
- **Granola/Fruit Bar:** 1 low-fat, whole grain bar
- **Cereal:** 1 cup whole grain cereal (like Cheerios or Multigrain Chex)
- **Trail Mix:** 1/3 cup made with nuts, seeds, low-fat granola, and dried fruit
- **Pretzels:** about 20 tiny twists
- **Popcorn:** 2 cups "light" microwave popcorn (without butter)
- **Baked Chips:** (like Frito-Lay potato chips or Doritos)
- **Cookies:** Frootie Animal Crackers (10-15 cookies) or 3 Fig Newtons, Teddy Grahams (1 snack pack or 24 grahams)
- **Fruit Smoothies:** store-bought (like Silk or Stonyfield brand) or homemade with fresh or frozen fruit and low-fat milk or yogurt

No Prep Needed:

- Water
- Milk (1 cup low-fat milk or soy milk)
- 100% Fruit Juice (no more than 6 oz. a day)
- 100% Fruit Juice with Club Soda/Seltzer

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Kids are active and growing and may need a snack between meals (about every 3-4 hours), if they get hungry¹. Discourage kids from eating snacks before meals and eating when they are not hungry. Help kids develop good habits by modeling healthful eating behaviors, and providing opportunities for physical activity (at least 1 hour every day).

Guidelines:

- Keep beverage choices healthful. Choose low-fat milk (1 cup serving), water, and moderate amounts of 100% fruit juice (the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends no more than a 4-6 oz. serving of 100% fruit juice a day for ages 1-6 and no more than an 8-12 oz. serving for ages 7-18). Flavored low-fat milk or soy milk is also a great alternative.
- Avoid soda, sweetened juice drinks, and sports drinks!
- Look for snacks that have at least 2 grams of fiber per serving listed on the nutrition label.
- Choose whole grain snacks as much as possible. Look for the word "whole" as one of the first ingredients on the product label.
- Keep fresh fruits and veggies readily available. Wash and prepare snacks such as carrot and celery sticks ahead of time, then keep in the refrigerator for easy snacking later.
- Choose low fat dairy products (for children over age 2), like low-fat cheese, cottage cheese, sour cream, yogurt, and milk.
- Aim for snacks low in fat, sugar and sodium. The Mayo Clinic recommends choosing snacks that have close to 5% of the daily value for fat, sugar, and sodium, and not more than 20% (this is listed on the nutrition facts label) - except nuts and nut butters, as they contain a healthy type of fat.
- Snacks that include at least two of the major food groups are best (grains, meats & beans, milk, fruits, and vegetables). For example, an apple with peanut butter, cottage cheese with peaches, or carrot sticks with hummus.
- Make it a good habit for kids to brush their teeth or at least rinse their mouths with water after they finish eating snacks. Sugary snack foods that stick in the teeth pose the greatest risk for tooth decay.

¹Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research 2004

Food Allergies:

Some people have food allergies or intolerances. Food allergies or intolerances can cause reactions such as sneezing, coughing, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, hives, rapid heart rate, shortness of breath, and rashes. People who have severe food allergies may not be able to touch or be in the same room with the food allergen. People with mild food allergies usually only need to refrain from eating the food, but can be near it. Food allergies are most often caused by proteins in milk, eggs, corn, nuts (especially peanuts), seafood, soy products, and wheat. Other foods frequently identified with bad reactions include meat and meat products, fruits, and cheese. Food intolerances are caused by an individual's inability to digest certain foods. Intolerances have adverse reactions to food that do not involve an allergic response. Generally, larger amounts of a food are required to produce the symptoms of an intolerance than to trigger allergic symptoms.