



Education

Healthy Snacks

How do I get my kids to eat snacks that are good for them?

The makers of snack foods know which people in the family to gear their advertising toward --the children of course! As a parent, it is getting harder to get kids interested in fresh fruit and vegetables when their eyes are drawn to all the colorful packaging of sugar-sweetened cereals, sodas, cookies, and snack cakes.

Try to teach your kids that foods shouldn't be looked upon as "good" or "bad." All foods, even sweets or higher fat snacks can fit into a healthy diet sometimes. The most practical approach is not to include these less healthy snack foods on your grocery list. It is fine to go out for an ice cream, a soda, or buy individual-sized chips or candy when you feel it is time for a treat. This shows children that these foods are acceptable, but not to be eaten in unlimited amounts. The sooner this approach is taken, the easier your job will be in getting your children to eat healthier, even at snack time.

Healthy Snack Ideas

- Fresh fruit (apples, oranges, banana, grapes, peaches, pears, melon). Try sliced combinations or offer yogurt for dipping.
- Baby carrots, broccoli and cauliflower tops (low-fat dressings for dipping)
- Low-fat or fat-free yogurt
- Vanilla wafers or graham crackers dipped in low-fat or fat free yogurt or milk
- Applesauce
- 1/2 bagel with fat-free strawberry cream cheese
- Pretzel twists
- Flavored rice cakes
- Low-fat microwave or air-popped popcorn
- Dried fruits (apricots, raisins, cranberries)
- Trail mix made with cereal (Chex or Cheerios), pretzels, nuts, seeds, dried fruits
- Mozzarella cheese stick (part-skim) with fruit chunks and low-fat crackers
- Cottage cheese with pineapple chunks
- Celery with peanut butter
- Celery with low-fat cream cheese and raisins
- Cereal bar (non-frosted) with milk
- Low sugar cereal with fresh fruit
- Home baked skinless chicken breast nuggets with honey mustard sauce
- 1/2 turkey and Swiss cheese sandwich with honey mustard and fruit slices
- 100% juices (limit to 1 or 2 eight-ounce cups per day to avoid juice taking the place of fresh fruits and lean milk)
- Low-fat or nonfat chocolate milk
- Low-fat or nonfat yogurt drinks

Dessert Snack Ideas

- Fruit juice bar
 - Jell-O with fruit
 - Fruit Newton Cookies (2)
 - Animal Crackers (15)
 - Fruit smoothies made with frozen yogurt, frozen fruit, Carnation instant breakfast
 - Yoqurt creamsicles (combine 1/2 cup plain yoqurt and 1/2 cup fruit juice concentrate (undiluted). Freeze in
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molds.

Note for parents of babies and toddlers

At 8 months old to 1 year, your child will be able eat small portions of the some of the snacks listed above. Typically it is recommended that cow's milk, egg whites, and citrus fruits not be offered until after 1 year of age. You should not allow nuts until your child is at least 2 years old. Always supervise your baby or toddler while eating to avoid choking. "Choke foods" include raisins, cranberries, grapes, chunks of carrot, nuts, seeds, chunks of peanut butter, hard candies, hotdog pieces, and popcorn. When in doubt, chop it or wait until your child is older. The danger of choking on these types of foods remains high until age 4.

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