



SNACKS

A bridge between meals

Keeping kids energized and healthy includes more than meals—snacks are necessary, too! A morning or afternoon snack can chase away the “hungries.” Offering healthy snacks helps kids to “recharge” until the next meal. Since snack foods make up about 1/4 of the calories kids get every day, it’s important to choose food that can satisfy hunger and provide nutrients. Including a variety of foods ensures that snack time will be nourishing and fun.

DESIGNING A SOLID BRIDGE

- A good snack includes at least one fruit or vegetable and one grain or protein. Take a look at page two for some snacking ideas!
- It usually contains about 100–200 calories.
- Portion control is key. Some great snack foods have lots of calories!

SNACK TIPS TO BUILD THE BRIDGE

- **Mix it up!** About five cashews, two domino-sized slices of low fat cheddar cheese and some apple slices make a great snack.
- **Try frozen fruits and vegetables**—they’ve come a long way. Check out peaches, berries, mangos, and edamame. You can eat them right out of the bag or thaw them in a plastic container in a lunch box. Just beware of added sugar and salt.
- **Avoid trans fats!** They are often hidden in packaged foods like cookies, brownies, and crackers. Some popcorn and peanut butter have trans fats too. Foods that have up to 0.49 grams of trans fat per serving can still be listed on the nutrition label as 0 grams. Check the ingredient list and avoid buying foods that list “partially hydrogenated oils.”
- **Try something new!** Bored with the same old thing? Wander the grocery aisles and ask questions.
- **Serve cereal?** A cup of whole grain cereal with less than 5 grams of sugar + low fat/skim milk + fruit = a great snack!
- **Have fun!** Fruit can be combined in a bowl for fruit salad or speared onto a stick for kabobs. Vegetables are fun with a dipping sauce. Plain yogurt mixed with herbs works well and adds nutrition

SNACK ASSEMBLY: HELPFUL IDEAS FOR HEALTHFUL SNACKS

Use this list of suggestions to make up your own healthy snacks. Hang it on the fridge to help you to put together fun and nutritious snacks. Choose at least one fruit or vegetable and one grain or protein.

FRUITS!

- Mandarin oranges
- Canned fruits in light syrup or 100% juice
- Applesauce/Apples
- Grapes
- Bananas
- Cherries
- Pears
- Berries
- Tangerines/Clementines
- Oranges
- Apricots
- Pineapple
- Mangoes (try them frozen!)
- Plums
- Avocados
- Melon chunks (all kinds!)
- Dried apple rings, apricots, raisins, berries (no added sugar)

Avoid fruit snacks, fruit leather, roll-ups, fruit chews, or other artificial “fruit.”

GRAINS!

- Dry cereal (whole grain, high fiber)
- Whole-wheat crackers
- Whole-wheat graham crackers
- Oatmeal
- Whole-wheat couscous or quinoa
- Soba noodles or whole-wheat pasta
- Granola or trail mix (keep portions small)
- Oat bran mini muffins
- 100% whole-wheat English muffins
- 100% whole-wheat tortillas
- Popcorn
- Whole-grain pita chips
- Whole-grain toaster waffles

Avoid trans fats: anything with “partially hydrogenated oil” in the ingredient list.

VEGGIES!

- Raw broccoli and cauliflower
- Cucumber slices
- Carrot coins or sticks
- Sugar snap peas
- Green peas
- Corn
- Green or yellow string beans
- Spinach or cabbage
- Eggplant
- Sweet potatoes
- Okra
- Zucchini & yellow squash spears
- Red, green or yellow pepper slices
- Jicama sticks
- Collard or mustard greens
- Baby corn cobs
- Lettuce leaf wraps
- Nopales

Avoid french fries and fried vegetables.

PROTEIN!

- Cheese
- Hard boiled eggs
- Yogurt
- Canned tuna (white albacore only 1/wk)
- Canned chicken
- Hummus
- Cottage cheese
- Beans (black, kidney, garbanzo)
- Soymilk
- Peanut butter and other nut butters
- Nuts: almonds, walnuts, cashews, peanuts (keep portions small)
- Seeds: sunflower, pumpkin

Avoid nut butter with “partially hydrogenated oil” on the ingredient list.

For more on building a healthy home, visit www.ymca.net/healthy-family-home.