

Nutrition Facts

Healthy Snacks for Kids

Make Time for Healthy Snacks!

Children have small stomachs, so they can't go very long without food. They need to eat nutritious meals and snacks to ensure that they get all the nutrients they need to grow and stay healthy. Offer 2 to 3 snacks a day at set times: mid-morning, mid-afternoon and bedtime. Space snacks so that your child will be hungry at mealtimes.

When preparing snacks:

- follow [Canada's Food Guide](#) so your child will get all the nutrients they need to learn and grow.
- include a variety of nutritious foods each day, including plenty of vegetables and fruit, whole grain foods and protein foods.
- make water the beverage of choice. If planning your drink as a protein choice, choose white milk or unsweetened fortified soy beverage. Other plant-based beverages are also healthy choices but don't contain as much protein as white milk and soy beverage .
- think of healthy snacks as small meals; any nutritious food or drink can be a healthy snack.
- choose foods other than peanuts/nuts, if your child's school is peanut/nut safe.

Pack a Variety of Nutritious Foods:

Vegetables & Fruit

- Fresh or frozen fruits and vegetables
- Fruit canned in water
- Vegetable sticks
- Salsa
- Salads
- Unsweetened fruit sauces

Whole Grain Foods

- Hot or cold cereal
- Whole grain crackers or breadsticks
- Whole grain baked pita triangles
- Popcorn, plain or seasoned
- Whole grain muffins or bagels
- Mini rice cakes

Protein Foods

- Nuts & seeds
- Hummus
- Peanut butter
- White milk or unsweetened fortified soy beverage
- Yogurt
- Cheese
- Beans
- Leftover meats
- Tuna, salmon

Beverages

- Make water your beverage of choice
- White milk and unsweetened fortified plant-based beverages (e.g., almond, pea, etc.) are also healthy choices.

*Nuts, seeds, popcorn, some raw fruits, like grapes, and some raw vegetables, like carrots, are good snacks but may cause choking in children under age three. Always supervise children when they are eating.

Smart Snacking Ideas

- Involve your child in choosing snacks
- Pack snacks in individual containers to help with portion sizes
- Stock up on “grab-and-go” snacks, like plain yogurt and fruit
- Cut fruits and vegetables ahead of time, so they are easy to grab from the fridge

Smart Snacking Samples

- Apple slices sprinkled with cinnamon and cheese cubes
- Vegetable sticks and hummus
- Air-popped popcorn and milk
- Yogurt mixed with cereal
- Mini carrot, oatmeal or bran muffins and milk
- Fruit smoothie (yogurt, fruit, & juice or milk, blended)



Foods That Don't Make Good Snacks

Some foods are not recommended as “every day” snacks because they provide little nutrition.

These foods are generally higher in fat, sugar and/or salt. They may also be harmful to teeth.

- Baked goods
- Sweets & sticky treats (i.e. cakes, candies, candy bars, fruit roll-ups)
- Spreads (i.e. chocolate, honey, jams)
- Sugary drinks (i.e. juice, punches, cocktails, pop, sport drinks, energy drinks, sweetened milk or sweetened plant-based beverages)
- Chips
- Sugar coated cereals

Choose these foods less often. These foods are considered “sometimes” foods.

How about a drink?^{1,2}

Water is the best drink to have when thirsty!



White milk and unsweetened fortified soy beverage count as a protein source. They can also be enjoyed when thirsty. Other unsweetened plant-based beverages (e.g., almond, pea, etc.) do not have enough protein to be considered a protein source but they can be enjoyed when thirsty.

What about 100% fruit juice? Fruit juice has a high amount of natural sugar, so it should be limited. Fruit juice may replace other healthy foods. Too much fruit juice may also cause cavities and diarrhea.

Other sweetened drinks, like pop, sports drinks, fruit punch/cocktail/drink, and sweetened milks contain high amounts of added sugar. These drinks should be saved for special occasions.

Drink water to quench thirst!!

Revised March 2019

¹ Canadian Paediatric Society. (2011). *Healthy Eating for Children*. Retrieved from http://www.caringforkids.cps.ca/handouts/healthy_eating_for_children

² Canada's Food Guide. (2019). *Make Water Your Drink of Choice*. Retrieved from <https://food-guide.canada.ca/en/healthy-eating-recommendations/make-water-your-drink-of-choice/>