

SMART SNACKS FOR CHILDREN

Section 1: Why Snack?

Smart Snacks for Children



Snacking is a regular part of the American lifestyle. Unfortunately, many popular snack foods, such as potato chips and candy bars, contain lots of extra, empty calories. Planning smart snacks for you and your family will boost energy and increase vitamin and mineral intake. It may even help you lose weight.

Between-meal hunger may lead to weight gain.



Between meal hunger can lead to overeating at mealtimes or grabbing a high-fat and sugary snack from a vending machine or a convenience store.

Avoid overeating and high-fat, high-sugar snacks by planning smart snacks for you and your family.

Children Need Snacks



Unlike adults, children have small stomachs. They are unable to eat enough at mealtime to get all the nutrients they need. Children's small stomachs mean they get hungry more often than adults.

Smart snacks help fill the gap. They provide energy, vitamins, and minerals that kids need to grow healthy and strong.

Section 2: Smart Snacks

Avoid excess fat and sugar.



Snacks should supplement meals, not replace them. Make sure snacks provide vitamins and minerals for your child.

Snacks containing a lot of fat and sugar are usually low in nutrients and may cause your child to gain extra weight.

Smart snacks are packed with nutrition.



Tasty, nutritious snacks include:

- sliced fruits such as strawberries, mangoes, papayas or apples.
- cut-up carrots, broccoli, zucchini, or green peppers served with dip.
- fantastic fruit smoothies made with 100% juice and low-fat milk or yogurt.
- low-fat yogurt or cottage cheese.
- crackers and cheese.
- dry cereal or cereal with milk.
- tortillas with cheese or beans.

Smart snacks are scheduled.



If snacks are served too close to a meal, your child won't be hungry at mealtime.

Scheduled meals and snacks will also make a child feel secure that meals will be provided.

Children may get hungry every two to three hours. This means they need two to three snacks daily in addition to breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Smart snacks fit into your busy lifestyle.



If you plan to run errands over snack time, grab a snack to go.

Taking snacks to go will help keep your child from getting over-hungry and cranky.

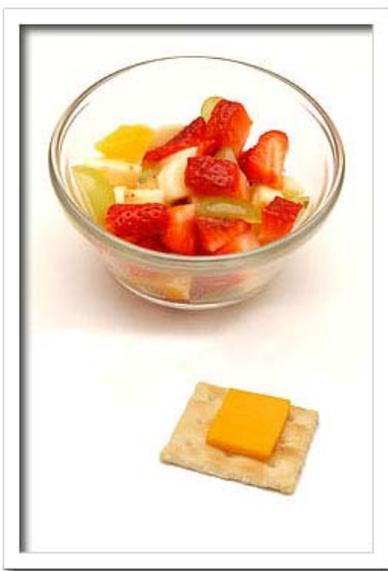
Pack smart snacks to go.



Snacks to go are cheaper and healthier than most snacks at the convenience store or in vending machines.

Examples of great snacks to go include: bananas, oranges, graham crackers, animal crackers and dry breakfast cereal.

Smart snacks are appealing snacks.



Plan snacks that are fun! Bright-colored fruits and vegetables will appeal to your child.

Awaken your child's sense of smell with fresh fruit or freshly baked bread.

Create interest by combining food textures such as crunchy crackers with creamy cheese!

Section 3: Involve Your Child

Planning Meals and Snacks



Involve both your younger and older children. It will help build their self-confidence and your relationship.

It will help develop your child's counting, coordination, language skills, and eating habits.

Children are also more likely to eat foods that they have helped prepare.

Meal Planning



Your child can help you plan snacks and meals for the week.

Young children respond well to being asked to pick between two options. For example, ask your child if you should put bananas or mangos on the list of snacks for the week.

Grocery Shopping



At the store you can point out where the different foods are found.

Your child can help you pick out fresh fruits and vegetables.

Meal Preparation

There are many ways children can take part in meal preparation. Appropriate activities your child can do are listed by age group below.

Infants can:

- play with plastic toys or empty food containers while you cook.
- help wipe the tabletop or the table attached to their high chair.



Toddlers can:

- carry non-breakable dishes to the table.

Two-to-three-year-olds can:

- carry unbreakable dishes to the table.
- help wipe tabletops.
- place crackers on a plate.
- help wash fruits and vegetables.

- break cauliflower.
- tear lettuce.
- snap green beans.

Three-to-four-year-olds can:

- knead and shape dough.
- pour liquids.
- pour cereal into a bowl.
- mix ingredients.
- spread soft spreads.
- put things in the trash.
- take grapes off the vine.

Four-to-five-year-olds can:

- cut with a plastic knife or dull butter knife (butter knives can cut boiled eggs, bananas, mushrooms, and olives).
- grate cheese.
- peel an orange or hard-boiled egg.
- mash bananas with a fork.
- squeeze oranges or lemons for juice.
- set the table.

Making Fun and Healthy Snacks

The following are some fun and healthy snack ideas for you and your child.

Fish in a Fish Tank

Ingredients:

- Crackers (whole grain)
- Fish-shaped crackers
- Cream cheese
- Blue food coloring



Directions:

Color a tablespoon of cream cheese blue. Spread the cream cheese on a whole grain cracker. Place a fish cracker in the "water" and you have a fish in a fish tank. Your child can help prepare this snack by placing the crackers on a plate and by placing the fish crackers in the water.

Painted Toast

Ingredients:

- Sliced bread
- Milk
- Food coloring in different colors
- A toaster
- Unused paintbrushes (or brushes reserved for food use)
- Small bowls or cups



Directions:

Pour a small amount of milk into each cup or bowl. Add a few drops of food coloring. Your child can now paint the bread with colored milk — as creatively as he or she wishes. When your child is finished painting, toast the bread. (Make sure the bread is not soaked with milk!) Your child (and family) can eat the artwork — alone or as a sandwich.

Funny Face

Ingredients:

- 1 slice of wheat or white bread
- Tbsp. of peanut butter
- Raisins (eyes)
- Strawberries (nose)
- Peaches (mouth), fresh or canned



Let your children:

- Wash the strawberries and peaches
- Take the bread out of the bag
- Spread the peanut butter on the bread
- Place the raisins, strawberries, and peach slices to make a funny face

Veggie Man

Ingredients:

- Radishes (head)
- Celery Sticks (body)
- Broccoli (arms)
- Zucchini slices (feet)



Directions:

Wash all vegetables and cut off the tip of the radishes, slice the zucchini into long slices (not round), cut the stems off the broccoli, and cut the celery sticks to five inches in length.

Let your children:

- Wash the radishes, celery sticks, broccoli, and zucchini
- Place the vegetables on plate to form the body
- Eat the veggie body with salsa or yogurt dip

Salsa Dip

Ingredients:

- 1 fresh green chili pepper or canned chili pepper
- 1/2 of a medium green bell pepper
- 3 medium tomatoes
- 1/4 cup chopped onion
- 1/4 cup cilantro
- 1 clove of garlic



Directions:

Wash and chop chili peppers, tomatoes, onion, cilantro, and garlic. Pour into a blender and blend until smooth. Pour into a small bowl and serve with raw vegetables. Makes 2 cups of salsa.

Let your children:

- Wash tomatoes and cilantro
- Pour the dip into a bowl

Yogurt Dip

Ingredients:

- 1–6 oz. or 8–oz. container of plain yogurt
- 1/8 tsp. curry powder
- 1/8 tsp. garlic powder
- 1 tbsp. green onions



Directions:

Chop green onions and mix with plain yogurt. Sprinkle curry and garlic powder on the yogurt. Spoon into a bowl and serve with raw vegetables.

Let your children:

- Sprinkle the curry and garlic powder
- Stir the yogurt
- Pour the dip into a bowl

Mexican Snack Pizzas

Ingredients:

- Corn or flour tortillas
- Tomato Sauce
- Skim mozzarella cheese
- Kidney beans (dried or canned)



Optional Ingredients:

- Mushrooms, bell peppers, onions, pita bread, pizza crust, and English muffins

Directions:

If using dried beans, follow cooking directions on the package then chop or use whole. For canned beans, chop or use whole without heating. Spoon tomato sauce and beans on the tortilla. Sprinkle with cheese, and place in the oven at 325° until the cheese melts.

Let your children:

- Spoon the sauce and beans on the tortillas
- Sprinkle the cheese

Fruit-Juice Pops

Ingredients:

- 100% fruit juice (WIC-approved) canned or frozen
- Ice trays (regular or different shaped)
- Foil paper
- Ice cream or Popsicle sticks



Optional Ingredients:

- Chopped strawberries or banana slices

Directions:

For frozen juices, follow directions on the can and pour into ice trays. Cover ice tray(s) with foil paper and put ice cream sticks through the foil, then place in the freezer for 2–4 hours or until frozen.

Let your children:

- Decide what kind of juice they want to use
- Decide what kind of fruit they want to add to their juice
- Pour juice into ice trays
- Stick ice cream sticks through the foil

Chili Popcorn

Ingredients:

- 1 bag of "light" microwave popcorn
- Chili powder
- Garlic powder (not garlic salt)



Directions:

For microwave popcorn follow directions on the package. Sprinkle chili and garlic powder on popcorn for desired taste.

Let your children:

- Sprinkle the chili and garlic powder on the popcorn

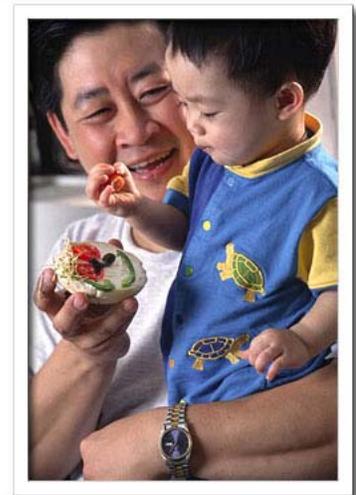
Bagel Face

Ingredients:

- A bagel half
- Cream cheese
- Bell pepper slices
- One cherry tomato, sliced
- One or two olives, sliced
- Shredded cheddar cheese

Directions:

Spread a thin layer of cream cheese on a half a bagel. Use a variety of small vegetable pieces to create a face on a bagel. Bell pepper slices may be used for mouth and/or ears. Tomato slices might create large eyes. Olive slices can add face details, and shredded cheddar can be used for hair. As always, avoid food items that might cause choking.



Section 4: Avoid Choking

Not all food is safe for children.



Some foods may get caught in your child's air passage and cause your child to choke.

Make sure you are near your child during snack and meal times. This will allow you to help if he or she starts to choke.

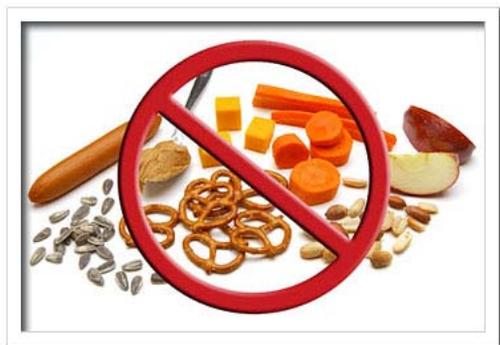
Take time for snacks and meals.



Your child should be seated for snack and meal times. Encourage your child to take time to enjoy the food.

Eat meals and snacks with the television off. This allows time for your child to focus on the food he or she is eating. It also gives you and your child a chance to talk.

Don't serve some foods to children under two.



Offer your child age-appropriate foods. Foods that may cause choking in children under the age of two include:

- hard candy
- hot dogs
- popcorn
- pretzels
- peanuts
- seeds
- raisins
- raw carrots
- raw apples
- whole grapes
- spoonfuls of peanut butter

Modify choking foods for older toddlers.



For children between two and four, foods can be prepared so that children are less likely to choke. For example:

- Cut slippery foods such as grapes and raw carrots into quarters.
- Cut hot dogs lengthwise and then into small pieces.
- Spread peanut butter thinly on crackers.

- «±²; ©© -; ; ÿ°α¥ ; --«ª («'® op¥; µ«±®; œª ÿª ±°¥¥ª ; ÿ±õš¥ª
..... © ÿ¥ œš °α; ; «ª ¥ ±; › ±°«ª ° «'® ; °α¥ ; --ª šª ÿ'É; š op® ¥š°;

Continue

.....Adapted with permission from the Texas WIC Program.