

10 tips

Nutrition
Education Series

snack tips for parents



10 tips for healthy snacking

Snacks can help children get the nutrients needed to grow and maintain a healthy weight. Prepare single-serving snacks for younger children to help them get just enough to satisfy their hunger. Let older kids make their own snacks by keeping healthy foods in the kitchen. Visit ChooseMyPlate.gov to help you and your kids select a satisfying snack.

1 save time by slicing veggies

Store sliced vegetables in the refrigerator and serve with dips like hummus or low-fat dressing. Top half a whole-wheat English muffin with spaghetti sauce, chopped vegetables, and low-fat shredded mozzarella and melt in the microwave.

2 mix it up

For older school-age kids, mix dried fruit, unsalted nuts, and popcorn in a snack-size bag for a quick trail mix. Blend plain fat-free or low-fat yogurt with 100% fruit juice and frozen peaches for a tasty smoothie.



3 grab a glass of milk

A cup of low-fat or fat-free milk or milk alternative (soy milk) is an easy way to drink a healthy snack.

4 go for great whole grains

Offer whole-wheat breads, popcorn, and whole-oat cereals that are high in fiber and low in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Limit refined-grain products such as snack bars, cakes, and sweetened cereals.



5 nibble on lean protein

Choose lean protein foods such as low-sodium deli meats, unsalted nuts, or eggs. Wrap sliced, low-sodium deli turkey or ham around an apple wedge. Store unsalted nuts in the pantry or peeled, hard-cooked (boiled) eggs in the refrigerator for kids to enjoy any time.

6 keep an eye on the size

Snacks shouldn't replace a meal, so look for ways to help your kids understand how much is enough. Store snack-size bags in the cupboard and use them to control serving sizes.

7 fruits are quick and easy

Fresh, frozen, dried, or canned fruits can be easy "grab-and-go" options that need little preparation. Offer whole fruit and limit the amount of 100% juice served.



8 consider convenience

A single-serving container of low-fat or fat-free yogurt or individually wrapped string cheese can be just enough for an after-school snack.



9 swap out the sugar

Keep healthier foods handy so kids avoid cookies, pastries, or candies between meals. Add seltzer water to a ½ cup of 100% fruit juice instead of offering soda.

10 prepare homemade goodies

For homemade sweets, add dried fruits like apricots or raisins and reduce the amount of sugar. Adjust recipes that include fats like butter or shortening by using unsweetened applesauce or prune puree for half the amount of fat.



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Go to www.ChooseMyPlate.gov
for more information.

DG TipSheet No. 24
March 2013
Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.