



Super Smart Snacking

Are you wondering if it's okay for children to eat between meals? Worried that snacks will spoil their appetite? Well, most children do best when they have three meals a day and are offered a snack between meals. And this is good news because kids like to snack! Snacks are especially important for younger children because they have small stomachs that fill up easily.

Often, three meals a day will not give kids all of the nutrients and calories they need to help them grow up healthy. Snacks help fill the nutrition gaps in children's diets.

*** Allergy Alert** Food containing life-threatening allergens (e.g., peanuts and other nuts) should not be available in schools or other settings where individuals may be allergic.

Choose snacks that pack a lot of nutrition

Healthy snack choices come from the four food groups of Canada's Food Guide. Think of healthy snacks as mini meals. High calorie, low nutrient foods are treats to offer occasionally, and after children have eaten the recommended servings from the four food groups. Smart snacking is part of a healthy diet.

Snacks that offer nutritional goodness are vegetables, fruit, yogurt, cheese, milk puddings, nuts*, seeds, whole grain breads, crackers, and unsweetened cereals - basically, foods from the four food groups. The golden rule is to include foods from two of the four food groups at snack time. Good examples are fruit with yogurt or celery with hummus (a dip made with beans).

Choose snacks that are easy on teeth

- Smart snack choices are low in sugar and not sticky.
- Because kids don't always brush their teeth after snacking, try to limit sweet, sticky foods (like dried fruit) to times when they can brush their teeth afterwards.

Plan what snacks to have and when to have them

No one food can offer all of the nutrition children need. It is a good idea to change the snacks you give children. Variety ensures that children get all the nutrients they need, and don't become bored with having the same foods all of the time.

Offer snacks about 1½ to 2 hours before or after meals. Try to keep to a regular schedule, as children do best with a routine.

Did you know?

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

Super snacks for children

- Juicy fresh fruit - apples, oranges, kiwis, grapes, strawberries, peaches, watermelon, plums
- Milk - plain and occasionally chocolate
- Yogurt drinks
- Water
- Whole grain breads, bread sticks, bagels, crackers and tortillas
- Unsweetened cereal - with or without milk
- ½ homemade English muffin pizza
- ½ Sandwich – veggie, cheese, lean meat, tuna, chicken
- Fresh vegetables - broccoli, carrots, cauliflower, peppers, mushrooms, cherry tomatoes, cucumber, celery
- Yogurt - with fresh fruit or veggie sticks
- Low-fat cheese
- Hummus with whole grain pita bread
- Eggs - hard boiled or Devilled

Fruit Smoothie

(Makes 2-3 servings)

Sure to quench any thirst!

In a blender, mix until smooth:

- 1 cup fresh or frozen berries
- ½ banana (cut into 1 inch pieces)
- ¼ cup orange juice
- ½ cup vanilla yogurt
- 1 cup ice cubes

Pour into glasses and enjoy.

Snacks that Pack Well

- Fresh fruit
- Celery and carrot sticks
- Fruit cups
- Fruit or vegetable juice boxes
- Cereal bars or cereal mix
- Bagels, rolls, crackers, bread sticks, rice cakes
- Unbuttered popcorn
- Crackers with hummus
- Cheese strings

Wrap Attacks

For that grumbling tummy!

- Thinly spread cream cheese over a tortilla.
- Sprinkle with shredded lettuce and carrot.
- Starting at one edge, roll tortilla up and cut in half.

Experiment with other fillings such as green or red pepper, mushrooms, finely chopped onions, grated cheese, egg, chicken, fish, refried beans, rice, and bananas.

Happy Trails Mix

Here's a snack that packs a lot of taste!

Mix:

- 2 cups unsweetened cereal
- 1 cup dried fruit
- 2 cups plain popcorn
- ½ cup unsalted nuts* or seeds

Store in a covered container for up to a week (if it lasts that long!).