
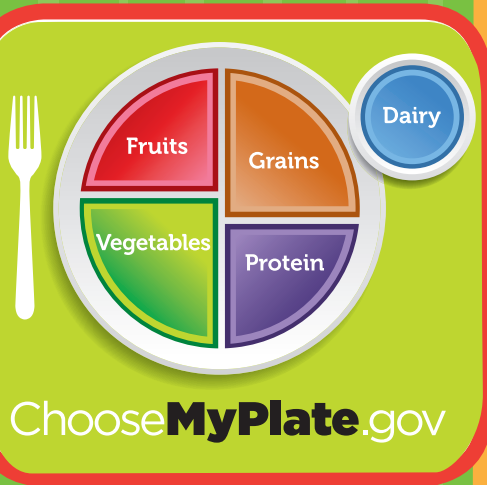


ABCs OF Growing Healthy KIDS:



KEEP ON SNACKING



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BE SNACK-WISE . . . USE THE *ChooseMyPlate* TO PLAN SNACKS

What's the first thing your children say when they come in the door? "I'm hungry. What's to eat?"

It can be hard for children to get all the nutrients and calories they need in three meals a day, especially if they are very active. Studies show many children do not get enough iron, vitamin A, or vitamin C. Good snacks can provide these and other vital nutrients. That's why nutritious snacks are good for growing children.

Snacks based on the ChooseMyPlate provide the biggest nutritional bang for your snack-time buck. Try these ideas for snacks at home or "on the go":

SNACKS FROM THE GRAIN GROUP

- Cracker stacks—wheat crackers spread with cheese spread
- Ready-to-eat cereals
- Flavored mini rice cakes or popcorn cakes
- Breads of all kinds, such as multigrain, rye, white, or wheat
- Ginger snaps or fig bars
- Popcorn
- Trail mix—ready-to-eat cereals mixed with raisins or other dried fruit
- Graham crackers

SNACKS FROM THE VEGETABLE GROUP

- Vegetable sticks, such as carrot, celery, green pepper, cucumber, or squash
- Celery stuffed with peanut butter
- Cherry tomatoes cut in small pieces
- Steamed broccoli, green beans, or sugarpeas with low-fat dip

SNACKS FROM THE FRUIT GROUP

- Apple ring sandwiches—peanut butter on apple rings
- Tangerine sections
- Chunks of banana or pineapple
- Canned fruits packed in juice
- Juice box (100% juice)

SNACKS FROM THE MILK GROUP

- Milkshakes made from fruit and milk
- Cheese slices with thin apple wedges
- String cheese or individually wrapped cheese slices
- Mini yogurt cups

SNACKS FROM THE MEAT GROUP

- Hard-cooked eggs (wedges or slices)
- Peanut butter spread thin on crackers
- Bean dip spread thin on crackers

Check out ten tips for healthy snacking at www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/downloads/TenTips.

Note: There are many alternatives available to peanut butter, including almond, cashew, soy, and sunflower seed butters. Feel free to use these as substitutes for peanut butter.



COOL KIDS EATS AND TREATS

Here are some snack foods which are simple to make:

ANTS ON A LOG—Fill celery sticks with peanut butter and top with raisins.

BANANA SPLIT SALAD—Slice bananas lengthwise. Top with a scoop of cottage cheese. Spoon fresh fruit or fruit cocktail over the top.

BUNNY FOOD—Combine grated carrots with raisins and a bit of honey. Serve on crackers.

FANCY SANDWICHES—Cut bread into shapes with cookie cutters. Spread with favorite toppings.

MAKE-A-FACE SANDWICH—Cut bread into a circle. Spread with peanut butter. Make “hair” and “eyes” with raisins, carrots, apple slices, or coconut.

PARTY MIX—Mix 1 cup dry cereal and 1/2 cup small pretzel sticks. Place on cookie sheet. Pour 2 tablespoons melted butter over the cereal and pretzels; then sprinkle with Parmesan cheese.

Bake at 250° F for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.

ROLL-UP SALAD—Spread a leaf of lettuce or cabbage with peanut butter. Place a celery or carrot stick in the middle. Roll up the leaf with the carrot or celery in the center.

TREASURE LOGS—Lay a piece of cheese on a thin slice of meat. Roll into a log shape.

MORE COOL TREATS!

APPLE-RAISIN LADYBUG

- 2 lettuce leaves
- 1 medium red apple, quartered and cored
- 2 teaspoons creamy peanut butter
- 2 tablespoons raisins
- 5 red grapes

Place the lettuce leaves on two salad plates. To make one bug, arrange two apple quarters, peel side up, on a lettuce leaf. Put dabs of peanut butter in the space between the apple quarters and arrange raisins on the peanut butter. For the head, place one grape at the stem ends of the quarters.

For legs, cut each remaining grape lengthwise into four pieces; put three on each side of the ladybug. Place small dabs of peanut butter on the remaining raisins; gently press onto the apples for spots. Repeat the process for the second bug.



BANANA BUG

- 1 small, not-too-ripe banana
- Pretzel sticks
- Creamy peanut butter
- Raisins

Poke the pretzel sticks into the banana for the legs and antennae. Use peanut butter to make eyes and to glue on a raisin spine. Makes one bug. This snack is fun to make with children.



BANANA-APPLEPILLAR

- 1 lettuce leaf
- 1 medium banana, peeled
- ½ medium red or yellow apple, cored and cut into ¼-inch slices (a pear may be used in place of the apple)
- 2 raisins

Place the lettuce on a salad plate; top with the banana. Cut ¼-inch V-shaped slices halfway through the banana, spacing cuts 1 inch apart. Place a pear slice, peel side up, in each cut. For eyes, gently press raisins into one end of the banana. Serve immediately!

MAKES ONE CATERPILLAR.

CHERRY TOMATO SPIDERS

- Cherry tomatoes
- Chow-mein noodles
- Peanut butter or cream cheese
- Raisins

Stick four chow-mein noodles on each side of the cherry tomato to serve as spider legs. Dab the raisins with peanut butter or cream cheese and stick to the cherry tomato to serve as eyes.

ICE CREAM IN A BAG

- Pint-sized zipper-type bag
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon vanilla
- ½ cup milk
- Gallon-sized zipper-type bag
- 3 cups ice
- ⅓ cup salt

Put the sugar, vanilla, and milk in the pint-sized zipper bag. Close the bag, making sure it is sealed. Mix the ice and salt in the gallon-sized bag. Put the pint bag inside the gallon bag and close the large bag securely. Turn and roll the bag for approximately 6 minutes until you have a semisoft, delicious treat.



LUNCH BOX PIZZAS

- 1 tube refrigerated buttermilk biscuits (10 biscuits)
- ¼ cup tomato sauce
- 1 teaspoon Italian seasoning or oregano
- 10 slices pepperoni
- ¾ cup shredded Monterey Jack cheese (or other favorite cheese)
- ¾ cup sliced or chopped vegetables (green peppers, cherry tomatoes, mushrooms, onions, broccoli)

Flatten each biscuit into a 3-inch circle and press into a greased muffin cup. Mix the tomato sauce and Italian seasoning; spoon 1 teaspoonful into each cup. Top each with a slice of pepperoni and 1 tablespoon of cheese. Bake at 425° F for 10–15 minutes, or until golden brown. Cool and package individually in plastic sandwich bags.

These are good cold in a lunch box or made for a snack. Include an ice pack or a box of frozen juice with the wrapped pizzas to keep them cold.

PLANT PART ART

- 1 large flat cracker
- Peanut butter or cream cheese
- 2 or 3 broccoli florets
- 1 celery stick
- 1 lettuce leaf, torn into small pieces
- 1 tablespoon grated carrots

Lightly spread the cracker with the peanut butter or cream cheese. Arrange the shredded carrot for the roots, celery stick for the stem, lettuce for the leaves, and broccoli florets for the flowers.

PUDDINGWICHES

- 1-½ cups cold milk
- 1 package (3.9 ounces) instant chocolate pudding mix
- ¼ to ½ cup peanut butter
- 15 whole graham crackers

In a mixing bowl, mix together the milk, pudding mix, and peanut butter. Beat on low speed for 2 minutes. Let stand for 5 minutes.

Break the graham crackers in half.

Spread the pudding mixture over half the crackers; top with the remaining crackers. Wrap and freeze until firm.

FRUIT LEATHER

- 6-ounce package of dried fruits
- 1-¼ cups water
- ¼ cup sugar

In a medium saucepan, mix together all the ingredients. Bring to a boil; reduce heat. Cover and simmer about 15 minutes or until the fruit is very tender. Drain off any liquid.

Blend in a food processor. Line a 15 X 10 X 1 inch baking pan with foil. Spray with nonstick coating. Spread the fruit in a thin, even layer over the foil. Place in a 300° oven for 35 minutes. Without opening the door, turn off the oven and let the fruit dry overnight. Lift the foil and fruit leather off the pan.

Remove the leather from the foil. Roll up and wrap in waxed paper. Keeps in refrigerator for up to 3 months or in freezer for up to 6 months.

HAPPY TRAIL MIX

- 2 cups honey graham cereal
- 1 cup tiny marshmallows
- 1 cup peanuts
- ½ cup semisweet chocolate or butterscotch pieces
- ½ cup raisins

Mix together all the ingredients. Store in a closed plastic bag or covered container.

MAKES ABOUT 5 CUPS.

CAUTION:

Be aware of choking risks and food allergies when preparing and serving meals and snacks. Think about the size, shape, and consistency when choosing foods due to the potential choking risks in children. Food cut in large chunks, small hard foods, and soft and sticky foods should be avoided. The top choking hazards for children include: hot dogs, meats, sausages, fish with bones, spoonfuls of peanut butter, popcorn, chips, pretzel nuggets, raisins, whole grapes, raw carrots, fruits and vegetables with skins, and marshmallows. Be sure that food is cut in small pieces (no larger than 1/2 inch), grated, or finely chopped. Be sure that children are closely supervised when they are eating.

Do not give honey to children under 12 months of age. Honey contains spores that can cause infant botulism.

Many children have food allergies or sensitivities to food. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, 90% of children's food allergies are from milk, eggs, peanuts, tree nuts (pecan/walnuts), fish, shellfish, strawberries, soy, wheat, and gluten. Carefully read food labels for potential risks and be sure to ask the parents if children have a known allergy or sensitivity.

Dental health is a growing concern with young children, so it is important to keep in mind that starchy, sticky, and sugary foods can cause tooth decay. Children should brush their teeth after any meal or snack, but particularly when you serve these foods.

References:

Snacking Choose My Plate, United States Dept. of Agriculture
www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/downloads/TenTips/DGTipsheet24MyPlateSnackTipsforParents.pdf.

SHAKE PUDDING

- ½ cup cold milk
 - 3 tablespoons instant pudding
- Place ingredients in a small jar, leaving the jar half empty for shaking. Secure the lid. Shake for a few minutes. Your pudding is now ready to eat!

ONE SMALL BOX OF PUDDING MAKES 4 SERVINGS.

FROZEN YOGURT POPS

- 2 cups yogurt
- 1 6-ounce can frozen fruit juice concentrate
- 2 teaspoons vanilla

Place ingredients in a large bowl and stir until well blended. Spoon into small paper cups. Insert a wooden ice cream spoon, plastic spoon, or popsicle stick, and freeze. (A small piece of foil wrapped around the top of the cup will hold the spoon in place.)

PURPLE COW

- 2 cups vanilla ice cream, slightly softened
- 3 tablespoons frozen grape juice concentrate, thawed
- 1 cup milk

Put the grape juice concentrate and milk in a blender. Blend at low speed until smooth. Add the softened ice cream and blend at low speed. Serve immediately.

SERVES 4.

Originally prepared by Katherine Cason, associate professor of food science

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Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences research and extension programs are funded in part by Pennsylvania counties, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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CODE EE0122 09/14pod