



Super Snacks

Toddlers and preschoolers like to snack. And, that's good news! Because their stomachs are small, they may not be able to meet their nutrition needs with just three meals a day. Snacks can provide nutrients and food energy that are missing from their meals. Studies show that many children do not get enough iron, vitamin A or vitamin C. That's why snacking comes in handy. Good snacks can give kids these and other important nutrients.

BE SNACK-WISE...

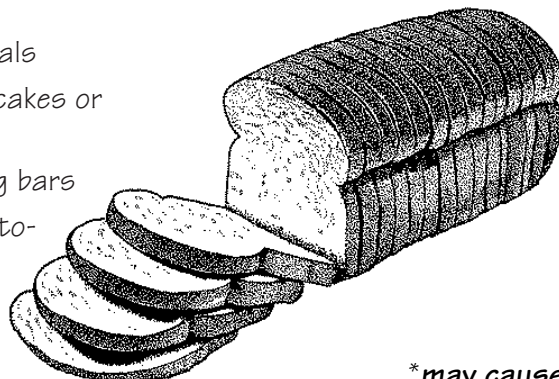
As with meals, schedule snacks as planned eating events, keeping them as supplements to regular meals, not replacements. By serving snacks no less than two hours before meals, youngsters come to meals with their appetites intact — ready for good food and good company.

Choose snack foods that complement the meals served. If the meals come up short on servings of vegetables or grain products, snack time is a great time to enjoy more. Vary snack foods as you do foods offered at mealtimes.

Plan snacks using the food guide pyramid. If snacks conjure up images of high-calorie, low nutrient foods — think again! Wise snack foods come from the five groups of the food guide pyramid. Offering snacks based on the food guide pyramid provides the biggest nutritional bang for your snack-time buck:

SNACKS FROM THE GRAIN GROUP

- Cracker stacks — wheat crackers spread with cheese spread
- Ready-to-eat cereals
- Flavored mini rice cakes or popcorn cakes*
- Ginger snaps or fig bars
- Trail mix — ready-to-eat cereals mixed with raisins or other dried fruit*



- Breads of all kinds such as multi-grain, rye, white, wheat
- Graham crackers
- Popcorn*

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 lowfat 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)

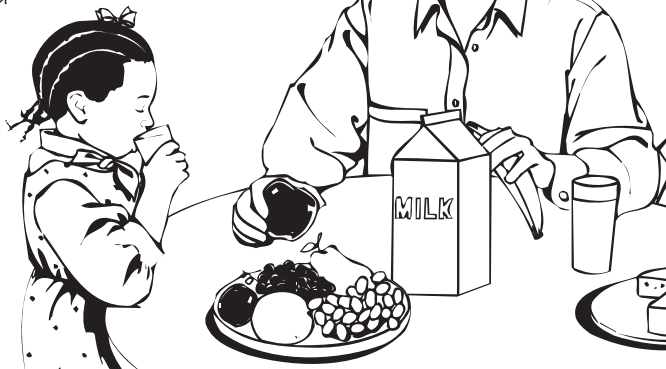
* may cause choking in children under the age of 3.

SNACKS FROM THE MILK GROUP

- Milk shakes — made from fruit and milk
- Cheese slices with thin apple wedges
- String cheese or individually wrapped 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

CHOOSE FOODS FROM TWO FOOD GROUPS FOR A GREAT SNACK.

- Whole grain cereal and milk
- Yogurt and fresh fruit
- Raw veggies with cottage cheese or yogurt dip
- Quesadilla (soft tortilla and cheese, folded and heated)
- Microwave-baked potato topped with salsa and cheese shreds



SOME SIMPLE SNACK FOODS 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 fruit cocktail over the top.

Bunny food — Combine grated carrots with raisins and a bit of honey. Serve on crackers.

Party mix — Mix 1 cup of dry cereal and 1/2 cup small pretzel sticks. Place on cookie sheet. Coat with 2 Tbsp. melted butter; sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Bake at 250°F for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Treasure logs — Lay a piece of cheese on a thin slice of meat. Roll into a log shape.

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

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.



Think “fun-time” at snack time too. Children especially enjoy foods with plenty of sensory appeal. Brightly-colored fruits and vegetables entice children to try a bite. Use your nose! Point out the aroma of baking bread or freshly-cut watermelon; then enjoy a slice as a snack. For fun with textures, combine soft, creamy cheese with crisp crunchy crackers.

Developed by Katherine Cason, Associate Professor of Food Science, Penn State.

Dr. James E. Van Horn, Better Kid Care Project Director

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