

Low-fat Snacks and Lunches

YUM!

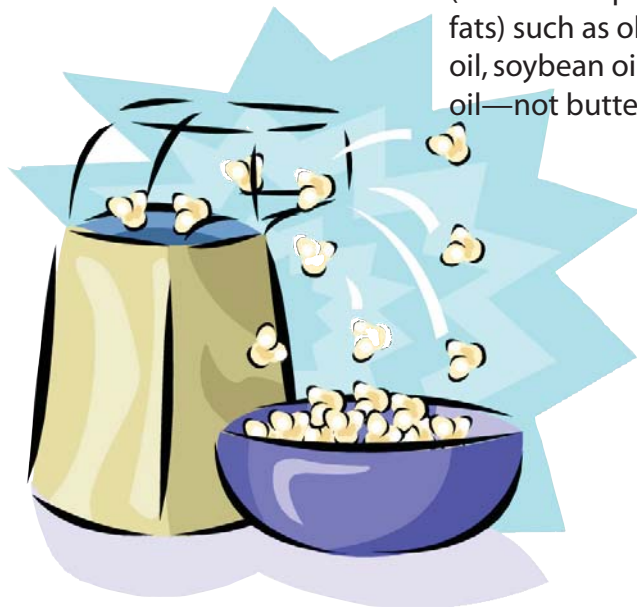
Obesity and Diabetes

With childhood obesity and diabetes on the rise, it is important that we consider healthier eating habits and lifestyles. Children need our guidance in choosing what is best for healthy eating. Supporting a healthy diet and lifestyle will add positive influences in many ways.

Healthy Alternatives

When preparing snacks and lunches, make grain products, fruits, vegetables, beans, fish, and lean meats the focus of the plan. Also consider using low-fat or fat-free dairy products.

When preparing foods, it is helpful to use vegetable oils (mono- and poly-unsaturated fats) such as olive oil, canola oil, soybean oil, and sunflower oil—not butter—to cook with.



Limit High Fat Foods
Limit items with solid fats, such as butter, lard, or foods high in saturated fat, such as bacon, sausage, or high-fat processed meats. Offer only small amounts of higher-fat foods, such as fries, and add balance with a low-fat choice, such as a vegetable (another combination would be ice cream with a few whole-wheat pretzels).

Providing the balance allows children to occasionally enjoy foods that are not always 100 percent appropriate. Children also will not fill up on just the high-fat food, but will have healthy choices with which to fill their hunger.



Remember to provide water as a drink not only with snack and lunch, but as a choice whenever needed. Having water available provides a break from sugary drinks and allows children to not confuse thirst with hunger.

**Caution: When offering foods to young children, be aware of choking hazards such as nuts, popcorn, raw vegetables, and hot dogs; do not give these to infants. Closely supervise young children when they eat.*

Try preparing the following low-fat snacks and lunches for the children in your care.

Yummy Low-fat Snacks

Spicy Popcorn

Serves 6 - adjust amount to group size

7 ½ cups air-popped popcorn

1 ½ t cumin

1 ½ t garlic powder

1 ½ t onion powder

1 ½ t chili powder

2 t Worcestershire sauce

Salt and pepper (optional)

Baked nacho chips (optional)

Whole-wheat pretzels (optional)

Directions: Preheat oven to 300 degrees F. Spread popcorn in baking pan. Lightly spray pan and popcorn with cooking spray. Toss popcorn with spices and Worcestershire sauce. Bake for 10 minutes, tossing once. Add baked nacho chips and whole-wheat pretzels for added crunch!

Pepper Bowls

Enjoy dipping
(and even eating the bowl)!

One pepper (any color) per two servings

Celery sticks

Carrot sticks

Pretzel sticks or veggie sticks

Low-fat cheese sticks

Your favorite low-fat dressing (Ranch is a good choice or try hummus)

Directions: Wash peppers and vegetables. Cut pepper in half, making two "bowls." Clean out seeds. Add small amount of dressing into bottom of bowls. Fill pepper bowls with vegetable sticks, pretzel sticks, and/or low-fat cheese sticks.



Lunches Packed with Flavor...Not Fat

Munchy Crunchy Chicken Salad

2 cans prepared chicken or 2 cups cooked (boiled) chicken

¼ cup low-fat plain yogurt

¼ cup low-fat mayo

½ cup chopped celery

½ cup green onions (optional)

½ cup chopped grapes

½ cup dried cranberries

2 t thyme

Salt/pepper to taste

Add lettuce for extra crunch

Directions: Mix and toss all ingredients well. Serve on whole-wheat bread, pitas, bagels, or crackers, or serve atop lettuce.

Veggie Pies

½ whole-wheat muffin or pita

2 T low-fat sauce of choice (tomato, pesto, cream)

2 T low-fat mozzarella cheese

1 t dried basil or 3-4 fresh leaves

1 t oregano (or any other choice of spice)

1 slice tomato or diced tomato chunks

Extras: Add veggies, such as peppers, zucchini, onion, broccoli, corn, etc., to taste.

Try adding beans such as garbanzo or black bean, too!

Directions: Use oven broiler setting or toaster setting on a small oven. (Toast muffin or pita for one to two minutes before preparing to avoid sogginess). Prepare muffins or pitas like a pizza pie (you may wish to stuff the insides of the pita). Top with cheese, spices, and extras. Toast or broil until cheese is melted.

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Sources:

<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/transfat.html#choice2>

<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/transfat.html#main>

<http://www.cnpp.usda.gov/>