



Healthy Snacks Tips for Kids and Families

It's hard work being a kid. Going to school, doing homework, participating in sports, and doing chores around the house all take energy to be at our best. And where do we get this energy? From food! Snacking between meals is a good way to stay healthy and keep your body energized all day long. But it's important to pick your snacks wisely and not grab the first bag of chips, soda, or candy bar that you see on the shelf at the corner store.

Choosing healthy snacks that are high in fiber and protein but low in calories and fat helps you eat less at mealtimes (because you are not "starving" by the time lunch or dinner comes), helps you get all your essential nutrients in for the day, helps you to concentrate and gives you energy for the day ahead. Snacks do a lot of work!

Don't forget about Portion Size:

Use your thumb to measure 2 tablespoons of peanut butter or hummus, 4 dice-sized pieces of cheese is a good guide. A handful of nuts and dried fruit is a good size portion. Use your fist to measure about 1-cup when thinking about fruit, cereal or popcorn. You can have about 3 cups of popcorn!

Healthy Snack Ideas

Fresh Vegetables: Choose a selection of fresh (local and seasonal, if possible) vegetables such as carrots, cucumbers, cherry tomatoes, peppers, celery, etc. Eat alone or with a fresh dip. (See below.)

Dips: Make your own or choose store-bought versions that are low in fat and calories. Hummus is great with vegetables, whole grain pita bread or pretzels, for crunch. To make your own dip, try adding some lemon juice and fresh herbs like parsley, basil, and/or mint to plain low-fat yogurt.

Fruit: Choose a wide variety of keep things interesting! Choose local and seasonal fruits (if possible) such as apples, pears, peaches, plums, cherries, apricots, grapes, berries and more. Bananas and oranges (although not local) are other great choices.

Dried Fruit: Try dried cranberries, cherries, raisins, apricots, or peaches. Eat them with cheese, nuts, or yogurt.

Nuts and Seeds: Try a variety and see which one you like best! In addition to peanuts try almonds, cashews, Brazil nuts, walnuts, sunflower seeds, and pumpkin seeds. Eat them on with dried fruit, cheese or add to yogurt.

Cheese: Try a variety of types: cheddar, Swiss, goat, mozzarella, etc. You could even do tasting with different types and see which ones you like the best. Eat alone or with whole grain crackers, sliced apples or pears.

Popcorn: Make your own with an air-popper for a high-fiber, low-fat way to settle a craving for something salty and crunchy.

Other snack ideas: Hardboiled egg, peanut butter on a whole wheat English muffin or cracker, sliced turkey rolled up in a lettuce leaf, yogurt with honey and fresh fruit, pretzels and raisins.

Healthy Drinks: Instead of soda, which can contain up to 10 teaspoons (almost $\frac{1}{4}$ cup!) of sugar per 12-ounce can, try one of the following ideas for a sweet beverage or experiment with fresh flavors to create your own recipe.

Start with seltzer water or club soda and add:

- Mint
- Fresh lemon slices and honey
- Orange slices and a splash of orange juice
- Fresh raspberries, blueberries, and/or strawberries (mush up the fruit a bit in the glass)
- Fresh lime slices and a splash of cranberry juice