

Nutrition for Early Learning and Child Care

HEALTHY KIDS | HEALTHY SCHOOLS | HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



Alternatives to Processed Meat

What are processed meats? Typically, processed meat includes any meat or poultry (beef, pork, chicken or turkey) that has been processed beyond being cut or ground. This includes deli meats; meat in a casing such as hot dogs, sausages, kielbasa; and anything smoked or cured such as bacon.

Why should we limit processed meat? Processed meat tends to be very high in sodium and preservatives, which can cause adverse health effects.

Instead of processed meat, try...

- Eggs
- Canned or dried beans, lentils or chickpeas
- Hummus or bean spread
- Edamame (soy beans)
- Tofu
- Fresh or canned fish (i.e. tuna or salmon)
- Nuts or seeds – such as almonds, cashews, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds
- Nut or seed butter – such as peanut butter, soy butter (i.e. WowButter™), sunflower seed butter (i.e. SunButter™), hazelnut butter
- Whole roast chicken or turkey, roast beef or pork

What can I do with these meat and alternatives?

- Use eggs to make an omelet, strata, frittata, scrambled eggs or egg salad; add chopped cooked, eggs to spinach or pasta salads; offer a boiled egg as part of a snack
- Add rinsed, canned beans or frozen edamame to quesadillas, burritos, tacos, soups or pasta salad. Try adding split peas to tomato sauce or macaroni and cheese.
- Find a recipe for 'veggie' burgers (using beans or lentils)
- Try making oven roasted chickpeas for a snack – 1 can chick peas (drained and rinsed) + 30 ml (2 tbsp) vegetable oil + seasoning (i.e. chili powder, garlic powder, paprika, dill, cinnamon, etc.). Roast in 205°C (400°F) oven for 30-45 min. (stir half way through to ensure even cooking).
- Add tofu to casseroles or stir fry's or try adding dessert tofu to smoothies.
- Make canned tuna or salmon sandwiches, salmon burgers, tuna melts, fish cakes, or use canned fish in casseroles and salads. Try making mini tuna melts on whole grain crackers for a snack.
- Make your own granola bars with whole oats and add nuts, seeds and nut or seed butter.
- Cook a roast beef or chicken and slice up the leftovers for sandwiches, soups, salads or casseroles, or offer bite size pieces of meat with dip for a snack.