

Snack Ideas

Snacks are an important source of nutrition for children. Young children have small stomachs that tend to fill up quickly. Providing nutritious snacks throughout the day gives their bodies energy to support growth and development.

Here are some ideas to get you started:

Vegetables and fruit

- Fresh: snap peas, broccoli, cauliflower, bell peppers, cucumbers, carrots, celery, cherry tomatoes, lettuce wraps (wrap shredded carrot, cucumber and cheese or hummus in a lettuce leaf), orange slices, mandarin oranges, berries, melon, pineapple, mango, bananas, kiwi (cut in half and use a spoon to scoop out), plums, peaches, nectarines, sliced apples (tossed with a sprinkle of lemon or orange juice, or cinnamon sugar to keep from browning)
- Cut-up fruit is more likely to be eaten than whole fruit.
- Canned: unsweetened applesauce or other unsweetened fruit purees, any canned fruit in juice
- Frozen: all frozen vegetables (without sauce) and fruit (unsweetened) are a great choice
- Dip: hummus, bean dip, guacamole or yogurt-based dip, for dipping vegetables and fruit

Grain products

- Dry, whole grain cereal (ex: toasted oat 'O's,' wheat squares or flakes)
- Whole grain crackers (choose lower sodium varieties)
- Whole wheat pita wedges, naan bread or roti with hummus, bean dip or guacamole
- Homemade snack mix: dried whole grain cereal, unsalted pretzels, dried fruit, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds or dry roasted soy beans
- Multi-grain or baked tortilla chips with salsa

- Homemade mini muffins (make with whole wheat flour and/or oats and fruit like banana, blueberry, pumpkin or apple)
- Air-popped popcorn (plain or with a small amount of melted margarine/butter). Do not give popcorn to children under four years of age.

Milk and alternatives

- Yogurt: small yogurt cups, yogurt tubes, yogurt drinks, frozen yogurt pops, yogurt fruit parfait (yogurt, fruit and granola or dry cereal)
- Cheese: any hard cheese, string cheese, cottage cheese
- Kefir (a fermented milk drink found in the dairy section of the grocery store)
- Milk or fortified soy beverage
NOTE: Serve whole or homogenized milk (3.25% MF) until two years of age. Reduced fat milks (2%, 1% or skim) and fortified soy beverages can be introduced after two years of age.

Meat and alternatives

- Boiled egg or egg salad
- Hummus or bean dip
- Bean salad
- Baked beans in tomato sauce
- Cut-up pieces of roast chicken, beef or pork, in a sandwich or on their own, with mustard for dipping
- Half or one-quarter of a tuna or salmon-salad sandwich
- Nut or seed butter (ex: peanut butter, almond butter, pea butter, SunButter™, Wowbutter™), spread thinly on mini bagels, brown rice cakes, whole grain crackers or toast

**Limit processed meats such as bacon, wieners, salami, bologna or sausages because they are high in salt, and low in nutrition.*

Be aware of food allergies and child care facility policies. Choose age-appropriate foods. Remember that children under four years of age are at high risk for choking.