

Mississippi State Department of Health

Smart Snacks



Smart Snacks

Most kids like to snack, and snacks can be good for you. Think of snacks as mini-meals that can provide the nutrients and energy your child needs to grow, play and learn.

Help your child snack smart.

Your child has a small stomach and probably eats less at meals than you do. Most young children do best when they have 3 meals and 2 – 3 snacks a day. Smart snacks between meals can help fill the gaps.

Keep healthy snacks handy.

Make sure healthy snack foods are available and easy for your child to get to eat. Some healthy snack ideas include fresh or canned fruit, cereal, milk, cheese sticks, boiled eggs, raw vegetables*, peanut butter*, crackers, and yogurt or pudding.



Time snacks carefully.

Snacks served too close to mealtime may affect your child's appetite. It's best to serve snacks two to three hours before meals.

Keep snacks small.

Offer your child a small snack and let him or her ask for more if they are still hungry.

Snack wisely.

Offer snacks to satisfy hunger. Avoid giving food to reward behavior or to calm a child that is upset. This can lead to emotional eating later in life.

Go easy on snacks high in fat or added sugars.

High fat and high sugar snacks provide calories, but usually offer few or no vitamins and minerals. Soft drinks, fruit drinks, snack cakes, pastries, candies and chips should be limited in the diet. Too many of these foods may lead to your child not eating the foods they need to grow and stay healthy. High fat and high sugar foods can make your child overweight.

Smart Snacking Is Good For Your Whole Family

Quick Snack Ideas:

- Whole fruit, sliced into small pieces
- Canned fruit, packed in its own juice
- Bean dip with crackers
- Raw, cut up vegetables* with low fat dressing
- Graham crackers, animal cookies or fig bars
- String cheese
- Low fat cheese and wheat crackers
- Bagel and peanut butter*
- Yogurt
- Pudding made with low fat milk
- Cereal with low fat milk (or dry cereal)



Easy to make snacks:

Milk shake-up:	Pour milk, 100% fruit juice and ice in covered container. Shake!
Fruit juice pops:	Freeze 100% fruit juice in small paper cups or ice cube trays.
Crunchy bananas:	Peel bananas. Roll in peanut butter or yogurt and crushed cereal. Freeze.
Peanut butter logs*:	Fill celery with peanut butter. Add raisins to make ants on a log.
Cinnamon toast:	Spread a little margarine on whole wheat bread and sprinkle top with cinnamon sugar. Brown lightly in toaster oven.
Muffin pizza:	Top half of an English muffin with tomato sauce or pizza sauce and low fat cheese. Heat in toaster oven.
Peanut butter roll up*:	Spread soft tortilla with thin layer of peanut butter and sliced banana. Roll up and cut into small bite size pieces.

Offer water, 100% fruit juice, skim or lowfat milk with snacks.

***Be cautious with foods such as raw vegetables and peanut butter. These foods may cause choking in children less than 4 years of age. Peanut butter should not be served to children less than 2 years of age. When serving peanut butter to young children, it should be spread very thinly on foods.**

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