

Now You're Cookin'!

Nutritious Snacks for Preschoolers

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Did you know?

According to data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture:

- In the last 20 years, the number of 2- to 5-year-olds consuming soft drinks has increased 21%.
- Simple, more healthful substitutions can reduce a child's risk of becoming overweight. For example, trading a banana for 1 ounce of potato chips will contribute 12% less fat, 10% more fiber and 13% more potassium.

Filling the Gaps

A child's small tummy usually cannot hold enough at meals to keep them satisfied until the next meal.

Kids younger than 6 may need to eat two to three snacks a day because they usually can't meet their daily requirements in just three meals. Think of snacks as minimeals to help fill the gaps in their diets.



Keep track of what your child eats for a few days and compare that with the recommendations at www.choosemyplate.gov. You can print a sample plan based on age, gender and physical activity. Does your child's diet have gaps? If you notice your child is lacking certain food groups, plan snacks that will help them meet their daily needs.

Portion Sizes

Starting at about age 2, children begin eating the same foods as the rest of the family. While they should be getting the same variety of foods, their portion sizes need to be smaller to suit their needs. Two-thirds of the adult portion is usually about right. For example, an appropriate vegetable portion for a preschooler would be between 1/4 cup and 1/3 cup. With portions this size, small children need to eat more frequently to meet their daily calorie needs. Preschool-age children need around 1,300 calories per day.

Children should be getting the majority of their calories from a variety of grains (preferably whole grains), vegetables, fruits, milk products and lean protein sources.

If your child is a juice drinker, try to limit the amount to 6 ounces or less per day and encourage more whole fruit. Adding whole fruit is an easy way to incorporate more fiber into their diets.

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Make Fruits and Veggies Fun

Often times, getting kids to eat fruits and vegetables is challenging. Try making snack time fun. For example, provide a variety of cut-up fruits or vegetables and let them create their own kabobs with your assistance. You also may want to try serving vegetables with low-fat dip to make them more appealing.

Tip:
Keep baggies of cut-up fruits and veggies in the fridge for a healthy grab-and-go snack.

Beverages Count!

Liquid calories can add up quickly. One can of soda pop has up to 170 calories and no nutrients.

Low-fat/fat-free milk and 100% juice provide nutrients along with calories. Replacing soda with healthier options, such as water, milk and juice, can help children get more of the nutrients they need to grow and develop properly.

Kid-friendly Snacks

Use this checklist when planning snacks to help choose healthy snacks your kids will like.

___ Does it taste good?
___ Does it look appetizing?
___ Does it provide vitamins and minerals?
___ Can it be chewed and swallowed easily?
___ Will it be a choking hazard?
___ Is it a finger food?
___ Is it different from yesterday's snack?
___ Can your child help prepare it?

Children under 5 years of age are at a risk of choking on food or other objects. Always supervise young children while they are eating. Remind them to chew food thoroughly, take small bites and eat slowly. (Toddlers usually can eat foods that are cut into ½-inch pieces.)

Did you know?

According to the American Journal of Clinical Nutrition, sweetened beverages contribute 8% to 9% of total calories for adults and children.

Try these simple, healthy snack ideas from each food group:

Grain Group	Vegetable Group	Fruit Group	Dairy Group	Protein Foods Group
Cereal	Fresh veggies with low-fat dip	Apple slices with peanut butter* or sunflower seed butter	Yogurt	Hard-cooked egg
Wheat crackers with cheese	Celery with peanut butter* or sunflower seed butter	Dried fruit	String cheese	Peanut butter* or sunflower seed butter (on crackers)
Rice cakes	Cherry tomatoes	100% fruit juice	Pudding	Bean dip
Trail mix (cereal, nuts,* dried fruit)	Vegetable juice	Applesauce	Flavored low-fat milk	Mixed nuts*
Graham crackers	Sugar snap peas	Canned fruit (in juice)	Cottage cheese with fruit	Tuna salad

*Be aware of potential allergies.

Fun and Easy Recipes

Here are some recipes your kids will have fun helping you make.

Guide to abbreviations:

c. = cup
Tbsp. = tablespoon
tsp. = teaspoon
g = gram

Yogurt Grahams

1 graham cracker (large rectangle)
2 Tbsp. low-fat fruit-flavored yogurt

1. Break graham cracker in half. Spread yogurt on one half and top with the other.
2. Wrap in plastic wrap and freeze.

Makes one serving, with 80 calories, 2 g fat, 2 g protein, 14 g carbohydrate, 0 g fiber and 85 mg sodium.
Source: Colorado State University Extension Service

Chocolate Chip Banana Bread

⅓ c. canola oil
1 c. sugar
3 eggs, beaten
3 c. flour
4 to 5 medium bananas
½ c. chocolate chips
⅔ c. buttermilk
1½ tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. salt
½ c. walnuts or pecans, chopped (optional)

1. Preheat oven to 325 F. Spray 2 loaf pans (7- by 4-inch) with canola baking spray.
2. In a large mixing bowl, combine all ingredients until just blended.
3. Pour batter evenly into pans and bake for 1 hour until top is lightly golden brown and the sides pull away from edges. Remove from oven and cool.

Makes 24 servings. Each serving has 240 calories, 8 g fat, 5 protein, 41 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber and 220 mg sodium.
Recipe courtesy of Sheri Coleman, Northern Canola Growers, www.northerncanola.com

Waffle Snack

1 frozen waffle
1 Tbsp. low-fat cream cheese or peanut butter
1 tsp. jam

1. Toast waffle in toaster.
2. Spread cream cheese or peanut butter on top.
3. Top with jam.

Makes one serving, with 140 calories, 5 g fat, 4 g protein, 19 g carbohydrate, 0 g fiber and 260 mg sodium.

Quick Tip: Make this recipe on the weekend so it's ready for quick snacks.



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Vegetable Dip

1 c. cottage cheese
1 c. low-fat plain yogurt
1-ounce package ranch-style dressing mix

1. Put ingredients in a blender.
2. Blend on medium speed for about 30 seconds or until mixture is smooth.
3. Serve with assorted vegetables.

Makes eight servings (¼ cup per serving). Each serving has 120 calories, 1 g fat, 5 g protein, 5 g carbohydrate, 0 g fiber and 500 mg sodium.
Source: Penn State Cooperative Extension



Fruit Dip

2 c. low-fat sour cream
1-ounce package sugar-free instant vanilla pudding mix
¼ c. fat-free milk
4 tsp. lemon juice

1. Whisk together all ingredients until well-blended.
2. Serve with assorted fruit.

Makes eight servings (¼ cup per serving). Each serving has 70 calories, 4 g fat, 4 g protein, 5 g carbohydrate, 0 g fiber and 180 mg sodium.
Source: Penn State Cooperative Extension

Simple Snack Mix

1 c. whole-grain cereal
¼ c. dried fruit of your choice
¼ c. nuts (walnut pieces, slivered almonds, pistachios)
¼ c. small whole-grain snack crackers or pretzels

1. Place all ingredients in a large zip-close baggie or storage container.
2. Shake it up.

Makes three servings. Each serving has 180 calories, 7 g fat, 4 g protein, 26 g carbohydrate, 1 g fiber and 250 mg sodium.
Source: www.kidshealth.org

Eat Smart. Play Hard. Together

- For more information about food safety and nutrition, contact your county office of NDSU Extension.
- Visit the NDSU Extension website at www.ag.ndsu.edu/food

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