

# Healthy Snacking

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Snacking has a bad reputation, but eating several small meals or snacks throughout the day can be a very healthy way to eat. The quality and quantity of the snack makes all the difference.

Who can benefit from snacking?

**Kids** - Small stomachs can't hold lots of food. Kids need to eat four to six times a day to get the nutrients and energy they need to learn, play and grow.

**Teens** - Because teens are still growing in inches and pounds, it is important that snacks help provide the important nutrients teens need to grow without adding excess or empty calories.

**Adults** - Healthy snacks take the edge off of hunger and keep adults from overeating at meals. Healthy snacks can keep blood sugar levels more stable and help adults avoid late afternoon fatigue.

Tips To Make Healthy Snack Choices Easy:

- Choose a snack that includes at least two food groups, or a snack that contains a source of protein and carbohydrate. The carbohydrate will give you quick energy and the protein will provide a longer lasting energy. One example is apples



with peanut butter, another is yogurt with granola. Other good combinations include cheese and crackers, oatmeal cookies and milk and fruit and cheese kabobs.

- Keep a box in the refrigerator full of healthy snack choices like: string cheese, low-fat yogurt, fresh pre-cut fruits, pre-cut and or peeled vegetables, hard boiled eggs, lean ham or turkey slices, low-fat pudding or 100% fruit or vegetable juice. Hang a snack list on the refrigerator so everyone knows what the choices are.
- Have another box on the counter full of single portion size bags of nuts, whole wheat crackers, whole wheat cereal, graham crackers, trail mix, pretzels, or popcorn. Other shelf stable snacks that could be in the box include: dried fruit, fruit cups, unsweetened applesauce cups, or a low fat granola bar. Make sure everyone in the family can see and reach inside the box.



- Keep a few pieces of whole fresh fruit like apples, oranges and bananas in a bowl on the kitchen counter.
- Don't forget to have healthy drink choices on hand. Water is a great choice. Low fat or fat free milk (plain or flavored) is also

a good choice because it is packed with nutrients. 100 % fruit juice is a good choice occasionally because of the vitamins and phytochemicals, but the calories can really add up if it is consumed multiple times a day. Avoid fruit flavored drinks which have added sugar and or corn syrup and little nutrient value.

Tips for Saving Money on Snacks:

- If you plan ahead and shop for snacks you can save money over resorting to vending machines, convenience stores and fast food restaurants, and the bonus is the snack will probably be healthier.
- Buy large boxes or bags of crackers, nuts, dried fruit etc. and divide the food into single portion (snack size) bags.

## Pineapple-Banana Yogurt Pops

Ingredients:

- 2 cups plain low-fat yogurt
- 2/3 cup crushed pineapple
- 1/2 cup mashed banana
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 6 Tablespoons sugar

Blend yogurt, pineapple, banana, lemon juice, and sugar. Pour into 3-ounce waxed paper cups. Insert wooden Popsicle sticks and freeze until firm. Makes 9 pops.

*Adapted From: Pick a better snack & ACT, Iowa State University Extension*

## Bean Dip

Kids love to dip chips and veggies!

Ingredients:

1 can (16-ounce) fat-free refried beans

1 can (10-ounce) tomatoes and green chilies or 1 ¼ cups mild salsa

Raw veggies and corn chips

In a mixing bowl, combine refried beans and tomato/salsa mixture. Serve with chips or veggies. Store any leftover dip in refrigerator. Makes 6, 1/2 cup servings.

*Adapted from: [www.kidsacookin.KSU.edu](http://www.kidsacookin.KSU.edu)*

## Active Kids

By America On the Move

Keeping your kids active is usually not a problem, but getting them to focus on learning can be a challenge. Physical Activity is a great way to get your kid's attention, so plan physical activities that also stimulate their brains.

When playing with your kids, tie in simple nutrition facts. Installing these messages during activity when they are young will lead to better eating and activity habits in the future. Here are some examples:

- Walk around your local farmers market and explore the smells and bright colors of fresh local foods.
- Ride bikes with your kids then eat a healthy snack together.
- Create a scavenger hunt for your kids and their friends. Include clues leading to nutritious snacks.
- Plant a garden with your kids and use the foods grown to create healthy snacks.

- Get your kids involved in making meals and tell them how certain foods work in their body.
- Create miniature science experiments with your kids. Eat healthy foods, and then do activities to see which foods make them play better.



Try these tips and watch your kid's knowledge of nutrition grow. Before you know it they will be experts!!

For more tips on how to stay active, visit [www.americaonthemove.org](http://www.americaonthemove.org)



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Colorado State University, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Colorado counties cooperating.