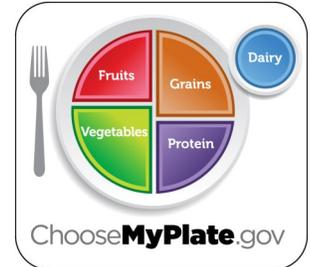




# HEALTHY SNACK IDEAS

from the Food and Nutrition Services Department

Serving healthy snacks to children is important to providing good nutrition, supporting lifelong healthy eating habits, and helping to prevent costly and potentially-disabling diseases. Snacks play a major role in children's diets. Choose snacks from all the food groups to ensure a well-rounded diet. Here are some healthy snack ideas from the Food and Nutrition Service Department.



## FRUIT

Fruit is naturally sweet, so most kids love it.

Fruit can be served whole, sliced, cut in half, cubed, or in wedges. Canned, frozen, and dried fruits often need little preparation.

**Pears and Apples** (it can be helpful to use an apple corer)

**Stone fruits:** Apricots, Cherries, Nectarines, Peaches, Plums

**Berries:** Blackberries, Blueberries, Grapes (red, green, or purple), Raspberries, Strawberries

**Tropical fruits:** Bananas, Kiwis (cut in half and give each child a spoon to eat it), Mangoes, Pineapple

**Melons:** Cantaloupe, Honeydew Melon, Watermelon

**Citrus fruits:** Grapefruit, Mandarin Oranges, Oranges, Tangerines

**Dried fruit:** Try raisins, apricots, apples, cranberries, pineapple, papaya, and others with little or no added sugars.

**Frozen Fruit:** Try freezing grapes or buy frozen blueberries, strawberries, peaches, mangoes, and melon.

For more information about food groups and MyPlate, please visit [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov).

## VEGETABLES

Vegetables can be served raw or lightly steamed with dip or salad dressing. Did you know that when you eat vegetables you are eating different plant parts? Choose vegetables from the groups below.

**Roots:** Carrot, roasted Sweet Potatoes

**Stems:** Celery, steamed Asparagus

**Leaves:** Lettuce, Spinach, Kale, Chard

**Flowers:** Broccoli, Cauliflower

**Fruits:** Cucumber rounds, Colorful Pepper slices, Grape and Cherry Tomatoes, Yellow Summer Squash slices, Zucchini sticks

**Seeds:** Snap or Snow Peas, String Beans, Edamame (pronounced "eh-dah-MAH-may") are fun to eat and easy to serve. (Heat frozen edamame in the microwave for about 2-3 minutes).

## DAIRY FOODS

Dairy Foods are a great source of calcium, which can help to build strong bones. Choose dairy foods that are low-fat or fat-free.

**Yogurt:** Look for brands that are low-fat or fat-free and low in sugars.

**Low-Fat Cheese:** Cottage cheese, mozzarella, feta, goat

# PROTEIN

**Eggs:** Hard boiled make a great snack.

**Nuts:** A small handful of nuts is a reasonable serving size. Examples include peanuts, pistachios, almonds, walnuts, cashews, or soy nuts. Look for nuts that are unsalted.

**Trail Mix:** Trail mixes are easy to make and store well in a sealed container. Items to include: low-fat granola, whole grain cereals, peanuts, cashews, almonds, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, and dried fruits like raisins, apricots, apples, pineapple, or cranberries.

**Luncheon Meat:** Choose lower-fat, reduced-sodium brands of turkey, ham, and roast beef.

# WATER

Water should be the main drink served to kids at snack times. Water satisfies thirst and does not have sugar or calories.

# DIPS

Try low-fat salad dressings, like fat-free Ranch or Thousand Island, store-bought light dips, bean dips, guacamole, hummus (which comes in dozens of flavors), salsa, or nut butter.

# WHOLE GRAINS

**Whole Wheat English Muffins, Pita, or Tortillas**

**Breakfast Cereal:** Either dry or with low-fat milk, whole grain cereals like Cheerios, Grape-Nuts, Raisin Bran, Frosted Mini Wheats, and Wheaties make good snacks. Look for cereals with no more than 35% added sugars by weight (or roughly 8 grams of sugar per serving).

**Crackers:** Whole-grain crackers like Triscuits, which come in different flavors or thin crisps (or similar woven wheat crackers), Kalvi Rye crackers, or whole wheat Matzos.

**Rice Cakes:** Look for rice cakes made from brown (whole grain) rice.

**Baked Tortilla Chips:** Baked tortilla chips are usually low in fat. Look for brands with less sodium.

**Granola and Cereal Bars:** Look for whole grain granola bars that are low in fat and sugars.

**Pretzels, Breadsticks, and Flatbreads:** These low-fat items can be offered as snacks now and then. However, most of these snacks are not whole grain and most pretzels are high in salt.

**As a general guideline, prepare snacks that include at least two food groups.**

English Muffin, Rice Cake or Crackers with cheese	 	Tomatoes and cucumber with goat, feta or mozzarella cheese	 
Tortilla chips with guacamole or salsa.	 	Yogurt with fresh or frozen fruit, add nuts or seeds	  
Veggies with guacamole, hummus, or bean dip.	 	Salad with greens, 1/2 cup veggies, top with seeds, nuts, meat or dairy for added protein.	  
Trail mix—combine nuts, seeds, and dried fruit	 	Cut whole wheat pitas in half and let kids add veggies with dressing or hummus.	  
Apples with nut butter	 		