

The A-B-C's of Healthy & Fun Snacks for Children (& Parents too!)

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Choosing healthy snacks for our children is a very important part of ensuring they are eating a healthy overall diet, and getting all the nutrients their bodies need to function optimally. A snack doesn't have to or shouldn't mean a "sugar" snack. Think of snacks as "mini-meals". It's best to include fruits and veggies wherever you can, as these are our most nutrient-dense foods. One important tip is to be sure to have a protein food with all carbs so blood sugar levels don't peak quickly and drop off soon after, giving unbalanced energy, and therefore creating a situation that could lead to health problems. Keep tasty and healthy foods available and ready-to-eat, so when hunger hits... and it will, you'll be "armed" with the right foods! You may want to hang this on the fridge for a quick reference of ideas...

Choosing healthy snacks can be as easy as 1-2-3, or A-B-C!

Apple slices: or banana with natural peanut butter (like Kroger brand) or almond butter

Broccoli "trees": with dill dip or another low-fat dip & low-fat milk (or soy milk-plain)

Celery: with peanut butter and raisins... "Ants on a Log!" AND **C**ottage cheese- lowfat with fresh fruit on top

Dried fruit trail mix: with nuts (see "nuts" below): like apricots, raisins, cranberries, pineapple, papaya, bananas, etc. Such a great nutritional and energy boost! Make your own favorite mix. Little ones will have fun helping!

Eggs: hard cooked (boiled)

Fresh fruit: (go for a variety of colors) with low-fat string cheese

Guacamole dip: (can mix in salsa too!) with corn tortilla chips (without trans fats)

Honeydew melon: with some nuts or milk

Iced "fruit pops": pour 100% fruit juice of any variety into popsicle molds & freeze!

Jelly (100% spread-able fruit): with natural peanut butter on whole wheat crackers

Kabobs: chop up some colorful fruit, and have fun sliding them onto wooden kabobs to enjoy!

Lettuce (dark leaf) salad: with veggies & sunflower seeds &/or almond slivers on top

Muffins: with bran, raisins, banana, zucchini, carrot & raisin, pumpkin, lemon, etc.

Nuts & seeds: like peanuts, cashews, almonds -good source of calcium, & walnuts, and pumpkin, sesame, or sunflower seeds. These all have wonderful protective qualities, fiber, and nutrients!

Orange “wheels” (slices): with low-fat milk... kids can have fun rolling then eating them. The vitamin C in the orange will help the calcium in the milk to be better absorbed!

Pretzels: whole wheat with string cheese AND Peanut butter & 100% spread-able fruit (no sugar added jelly) on a whole wheat bagel or whole wheat crackers like “Kashi TLC”: Tasty Little Crackers are great, and in the health food section of grocery store

Quesadilla: with melted low-fat cheese (& vegetarian refried beans-opt.), dipped in salsa

Raw veggies: with low-fat ranch dressing or other favorite dip & low-fat cheese cubes

Smoothie: use frozen fruit to get the consistency of a milkshake...without any guilt! (8 oz. soy or skim milk, 1 soft banana, a little 100% apple juice, a few frozen strawberries, some frozen blueberries, protein powder (optional). Put all ingredients into a blender or smoothie maker & blend well. You can do any combination of frozen fruits and juices. Frozen pineapple, mango, and passion fruit are very good. Have fun experimenting. Can be frozen as popsicles too!

Turkey slices: with cheese and grapes

Unbuttered popcorn: (Smart Balance microwave popcorn or Trader Joes’ is trans fat free)

Veggie mini-pizzas: and whole wheat English muffins

Wraps: wrap up foods in whole wheat tortillas (Trader Joes are trans fat free and great!)... like turkey, cheese, and light mayo; tuna salad; chicken salad; veggies: raw or grilled with low-fat cream cheese; taco sauce, cheese, and beans, etc. AND Whole grain cereals with low-fat milk.

eXotic fruit: like mango, papaya, and passion fruit

Yogurt: plain, fat free with fresh fruit stirred in, like peaches, pineapple (fresh or canned in it’s own juice), strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, etc. are great. Can be topped with natural granola.

Zoo animal crackers: (no trans fats!) with low-fat milk

***Hopefully you are inspired to try some new snacks. Also, there are many great free resources and recipes online. Simply go to www.google.com then type in “healthy children’s snacks”, and have fun exploring lots of wonderful recipes and ideas to help “spice up” the snacks you provide your child/children... even for yourself! ☺

