



Choosing Healthy Snacks for Kids

While meals make up the majority of a child's nutritional intake, most children eat at least one snack per day. While many of the most commonly offered kids' snacks tend to be of lower nutritional value than meals, snacks still can support—or even enhance—your child's overall healthy eating plan. Here's how:



- **Use snack times as a way to increase fruits and vegetable intake.** Most kids do not eat the recommended amount of fruits and vegetables ([/English/healthy-living/nutrition/Pages/Energy-In-Recommended-Food-Drink-Amounts-for-Children.aspx](#)). Snack times offer a great opportunity to increase access and exposure to these nutrient-dense foods. Consider pairing them up with dairy products or dairy substitutes (such as grapes and cheese) lean proteins (such as celery and peanut butter), or whole-grain cereals and bread (such as banana sandwich on whole grain bread).
- **Keep a range of healthy foods handy at home.** It is much easier to make easy, healthy snacks when you keep a few key items stocked at home. Ideas include different types of raw vegetables and fruit, yogurt dip, hummus, and cheese sticks.
- **Avoid processed foods and added sugars.** Processed foods (made in a factory and sold in bags and boxes) do not have many nutrients and often have a lot of added sugar and salt. In addition, children may become hungry faster after eating processed foods. *See [Snacks & Sugary Foods in School: AAP Policy Explained](#) ([/English/healthy-living/nutrition/Pages/Snacks-and-Sugary-Foods-in-School-AAP-Policy-Explained.aspx](#)) for more information.*
- **Teach your children to eat a rainbow of colors.** Arrange your children's foods to show the beauty of fresh, brightly colored foods. Talk about the farms where food comes from and the farmers who help grow it.

Snack Ideas for Families: Foods to Keep on Hand

Type	Suggestions
Fresh Fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apples, bananas, peaches, nectarines, pears Cherries, grapes, plums (sliced or pitted) Orange or grapefruit sections Strawberries, grapes (cut into half for small children)
Dried Fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apples, apricots, peaches, pears (cut up) Dates, prunes Raisins, cranberries
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carrot sticks, celery sticks Raw or steamed cauliflower, broccoli Bell pepper strips—red, yellow, orange, and green Grape and cherry tomatoes Fresh or frozen corn and peas Sliced cucumbers Avocado slices or chunks
Lean Proteins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fish (canned tuna, salmon, sardines, whitefish) Peanut butter or other nut butters (smooth, spread on whole grain bread or crackers) Edamame beans or chickpeas or hummus spreads Cooked tofu cubes or tofu dip Hard boiled eggs
Dairy Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cheese (sliced, grated, or diced) Cottage cheese Low-sugar yogurt Milk—cow's milk or non-dairy milks
Breads & Cereals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whole wheat bread Whole grain tortillas or tortilla chips Whole grain crackers Whole grain dry cereals Rice cakes Whole grain pitas and bagels Air-popped popcorn

Additional Information & Resources:

- [Selecting Snacks for Toddlers \(/English/ages-stages/toddler/nutrition/Pages/Selecting-Snacks-for-Toddlers.aspx\)](/English/ages-stages/toddler/nutrition/Pages/Selecting-Snacks-for-Toddlers.aspx)
- [How to Get Your Child to Eat More Fruits & Veggies \(/English/healthy-living/nutrition/Pages/How-to-Get-Your-Child-to-Eat-More-Fruits-and-Veggies.aspx\)](/English/healthy-living/nutrition/Pages/How-to-Get-Your-Child-to-Eat-More-Fruits-and-Veggies.aspx)
- [Energy In: Recommended Food & Drink Amounts for Children \(/English/healthy-living/nutrition/Pages/Energy-In-Recommended-Food-Drink-Amounts-for-Children.aspx\)](/English/healthy-living/nutrition/Pages/Energy-In-Recommended-Food-Drink-Amounts-for-Children.aspx)

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Source

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