



SNACKS—A BRIDGE BETWEEN MEALS

Keeping kids energized and healthy includes more than meals—snacks are necessary, too! A mid-morning and mid-afternoon snack can chase away the “hungries.” Offering a healthful snack at these times gives kids energy and helps them to ‘recharge’ until the next meal. Since snack foods make up about 1/4 of the calories kids get every day, it’s important to choose snack food that can satisfy hunger, supply the body with needed energy and provide nutrients. Including a variety of foods ensures that snack time will be nourishing and interesting.

Designing a solid bridge

- A good snack includes offerings from at least two food groups
- It usually contains about 200 calories.
- Portion control is critical—many great snack foods have lots of calories!

Example: *nuts and seeds are a good source of protein, which makes you feel fuller longer. And they contain monounsaturated “good” fat. BUT 1/4 cup of dry roasted soy nuts or a large handful--about 20--whole cashews add up to the 200 calories you’re aiming for in a snack.*

Make sure to portion out the nuts, offering them in an addition to a lower calorie snack food to make the nutrients available without overdoing calories.

Snack Suggestions to Build the Bridge

- **Mix it up!** About five whole cashews supplemented by two domino-sized slices of lowfat Colby or cheddar cheese (100 calories) and some apple slices is a great snack.
- **Serve cereal?** A small serving of whole grain breakfast cereal with some low-fat or skim milk and fruit adds up to a great recharge!
- **Go exotic!** Bored with the same old thing? Wander the produce aisle and ask questions. Look for **Jicama**—a vegetable that looks like a potato, but tastes like a cross between a pear and an apple. Peel the thin skin and make matchsticks—you’ll love it! Don’t forget **Kiwi**—the fuzzy skin is edible for a vitamin-packed handful!
- **Try Frozen Foods**—they’ve come a long way. Take a look!

Frozen Foods? Absolutely!

Look for frozen fruits-- peaches, raspberries, blueberries, melons and even mangos are available frozen. Eat ‘em right out of the bag, or thaw them in plastic container in a lunch box. SO yummy!

Check out Edamame! Edamame is another name for soybeans, they are terrific! Take a small handful out of the freezer the night before and thaw them in the fridge. They come with or without pods--so if your kids don't like shelling the beans from the pods, just buy the beans shelled.



Use this chart of suggestions to make up your own healthful snacks. Hang this list on the fridge to help you to put together interesting and nutritious snacks. Remember to choose from two or more categories!

SNACK ASSEMBLY: Helpful Ideas for Healthful Snacks

FRUITS!

- Mandarin oranges
- Canned fruits in light syrup
- Applesauce/Apples
- Grapes
- Bananas
- Cherries/Berries
- Tangerines/Clementines
- Oranges
- Apricots
- Mangos (try them frozen!)
- Plums
- Melon chunks (all kinds!)
- Dried apple rings, banana chips, apricots, raisins, berries



Fruit can be combined in a bowl for fruit salad, or speared onto a stick for kabobs. If a blender is available, consider smoothies!

Avoid fruit snacks, fruit leather, roll-ups, fruit chews or other synthetic "fruit"

PROTEIN!

- Cheese
- Hard boiled eggs
- Yogurt
- Canned Tuna (only once a week!)
- Canned chicken
- Hummus
- Garbanzo beans
- Beans
- Peanut butter (watch for trans fat!)
- Nuts: almonds, walnuts, cashews, peanuts Also Nut butters.

Avoid nut butter with "partially hydrogenated oil" on the ingredient list!

VEGGIES!

- Raw broccoli and cauliflower
- Cucumber slices
- Carrot coins or sticks
- Sugar snap peas
- Green peas
- Corn niblets
- Green string beans
- Yellow string beans
- Zucchini & Yellow squash spears
- Colored pepper slices
- Jicama sticks
- Baby corn cobs
- Lettuce leaf wraps
- Carrot raisin salad

Vegetables are fun with a dipping sauce. A light ranch dressing, sour cream or plain yogurt mixed with herbs work well and add extra nutrition.

Avoid French fries, fried vegetables

GRAINS! (Trans-fat free)

- Dry cereal
- Wheat or graham crackers
- Cereal bars
- Goldfish crackers
- Wheat germ sprinkle
- Granola or trail mix
- Oat bran mini muffins
- 100% whole wheat English muffins
- 100% whole wheat tortillas
- oatmeal raisin cookies/fig bars
- rice cakes
- toaster waffles

Avoid anything with "partially hydrogenated oil" in the ingredient listing. Grain foods often contain trans fats.

