

Stealthy Healthy Snacking

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR INCORPORATING NUTRITIOUS SNACKS IN YOUR KIDS' DIETS:

- Think fruits and veggies – kids need at least 5 servings of fruits and vegetables every day, so it is important to incorporate them into snacks to help ensure kids are getting all of those servings
- Get the kids involved – encourage your kids to help you prepare their snacks, it will give them a sense of accomplishment and will increase acceptance of healthy snacks because they're excited about eating their own creations
- Always look at nutrition facts – you may be surprised by the fat, calorie or sugar content of some of your favorite snack products, so take the time at the grocery store to compare the products and make healthier choices

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES:

- Always have a fruit bowl in the middle of your table. The more visible the fruit is to kids, the more likely they are to grab it and have it as a snack.
- When you first buy fruit, take a few minutes to cut it up into bite-sized pieces and put it all together in a clear container and keep it in the refrigerator at the kids' eye level. With the fruit already cut up and ready to eat, it's just as easy for them to grab the fruit for a snack as it is to grab a bag of chips from the pantry or cupboard.
- As with the fruits, when you buy vegetables, take a few minutes to cut them into kid-friendly pieces and store in the refrigerator for easy snacking.
- In addition to the staples of carrots and celery, try some different colorful veggies, such as bell peppers, raw broccoli and grape tomatoes.
- Add a dip to a veggie snack. Try low-fat cottage cheese, hummus, peanut butter or a low-fat ranch dip made with low-fat or fat-free sour cream and a dry salad dressing mix. Pre-portion your dip into small plastic containers that can easily be added to a snack bag with veggies of choice -- makes a great on-the-go snack.

SNACK BARS:

- Granola bars and cereal bars are a great way to snack on the run, but make sure you're checking nutrition facts before you purchase. If sugar or high fructose corn syrup are among the first few ingredients try to find an alternative that has lower sugar content.
- Bars with added fiber or protein are good choices.

SALTY SNACKS:

- When you purchase a large bag of pretzels, popcorn or another salty snack, take time to divide the large bag into smaller snack bags to encourage portion control. Get the kids involved by having them see how many pieces are in a serving size. Then have them count that many for each snack bag.

ADD A LEAN PROTEIN:

- To add longevity to a snack, try adding a serving of lean protein such as string cheese or yogurt. Tube yogurts are especially portable and can be frozen for an ice cream-like treat.

