

# Nutrition Notes from the Neuromuscular Center

## Healthy Snacking

### May 2012



Snacking on nutritious foods can help keep you full and curb your overeating at a meal.

Everyone likes to have a snack. What you choose is important to your overall health. Choosing foods that complement your diet is not always easy, but we will give you some good ideas to help choose wisely.

### **A Snack Does Not Equal Dessert**

A snack is a “mini meal” that contributes nutrient rich foods for an overall balanced diet. A snack should help you achieve your nutrition goals for the day. Snacks should just help curb your appetite, so you do not overeat at your next meal.

### **How Much Should I Eat?**

Snacks should be between 100-200 calories. There are many different choices to help curb your appetite and help you get all your needed nutrition. You have to watch out for hidden calories and salt in your snack choice. Try to choose whole foods and have a protein with your snack.

# Cut Back on Your Kid's Sweet Treats

## 10 tips to decrease added sugars

Limit the amount of foods and beverages with added sugars your kids eat and drink. If you don't buy them, your kids won't get them very often. Sweet treats and sugary drinks have a lot of calories but few nutrients. Most added sugars come from sodas, sports drinks, energy drinks, juice drinks, cakes, cookies, ice cream, candy, and other desserts.

## Serve Small Portions

It's not necessary to get rid of all sweets and desserts. Show kids that a small amount of treats can go a long way. Use smaller bowls and plates for these foods. Have them share a candy bar or split a large cupcake.

## Sip Smarter

Soda and other sweet drinks contain a lot of sugar and are high in calories. Offer water, 100% juice, or fat-free milk when kids are thirsty.

## Use the Check-Out Lane That Does Not Display Candy

Most grocery stores will have a candy-free check-out lane to help moms out. Waiting in a store line makes it easy for children to ask for the candy that is right in front of their faces to tempt them.

## Choose Not to Offer Sweets as Rewards

By offering food as a reward for good behavior, children learn to think that some foods are better than other foods. Reward your child with kind words and comforting hugs, or give them non-food items, like stickers, to make them feel special.

## Make Fruit the Everyday Dessert

Serve baked apples, pears, or enjoy a fruit salad. Or, serve yummy frozen juice bars (100% juice) instead of high-calorie desserts.

## Make Food Fun

Sugary foods that are marketed to kids are advertised as "fun foods." Make nutritious foods fun by preparing them with your child's help and being creative together. Create a smiley face with sliced bananas and raisins. Cut fruit into fun and easy shapes with cookie cutters.

## Encourage Kids to Invent New Snacks

Make your own snack mixes from dry whole-grain cereal, dried fruit, and unsalted nuts or seeds. Provide the ingredients and allow kids to choose what they want in their "new" snack.

## Play Detective in the Cereal Aisle

Show kids how to find the amount of total sugars in various cereals. Challenge them to compare cereals they like and select the one with the lowest amount of sugar.

## Make Treats "Treats," Not Everyday Foods

Treats are great once in a while. Just don't make treat foods an everyday thing. Limit sweet treats to special occasions.

## If Kids Don't Eat Their Meal, They Don't Need Sweet "Extras"

Keep in mind that candy or cookies should not replace foods that are not eaten at meal time. snack.

## Nutrition Education Series

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Go to [www.ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://www.ChooseMyPlate.gov) for more information.

# Snack Ideas

## 200 Calorie Snacks

- One tablespoon peanut butter spread on slices of a medium apple
- One cup tomato soup with five whole-grain crackers
- Three cups air-popped popcorn sprinkled with three tablespoons grated parmesan cheese
- Tri-color veggie snack: 6 baby carrots, 10 sugar snap peas (or green pepper strips), 6 cherry tomatoes and 2 tablespoons reduced-fat ranch dressing for dipping
- Small baked potato topped with salsa and 1 ounce low-fat cheese
- Toaster waffle topped with ½ cup blueberries and 2 tablespoons low-fat yogurt
- Six whole-wheat crackers and one slice low-fat Colby cheese
- Fruit smoothie: Blend 1 cup fat-free milk, ½ cup frozen strawberries and ½ banana
- One 6-inch flour tortilla with ¼ cup black beans and 2 tablespoons fresh salsa
- Quick-to-fix salad: 2 cups mixed greens with ½ cup mandarin oranges, 1 tablespoon sliced almonds and 2 tablespoons reduced fat dressing
- Mini-sandwich: Whole-grain dinner roll with 1 slice deli turkey, 1 slice low-fat cheese and mustard
- One 4-ounce fat-free, ready-to-eat vanilla pudding with ½ cup fresh fruit and 5 vanilla wafers
- Veggie pizzas: Split whole wheat English muffin. Top with 2 tablespoons low-fat cream cheese, ½ cup diced fresh veggies and one ounce low-fat mozzarella cheese
- Cinnamon-raisin mini-bagel spread with one tablespoon peanut butter
- Hot chocolate made with low-fat or fat-free milk and a small oatmeal cookie
- Whole-grain toaster waffle with 1 ½ tablespoons chocolate-flavored hazelnut spread
- Banana split: banana sliced length-wise topped with ½ cup frozen yogurt and a tablespoon of chopped nuts

Make snacks work for you by choosing nutrient-rich foods from the grains, fruit, vegetable, dairy and protein food groups. Snacks can boost your energy between meals and supply essential vitamins and minerals. There is a place for snacks in a healthy eating plan. Just choose wisely.

- Think of snacks as mini-meals that contribute nutrient-rich foods. You can fit snack calories into your personal healthy eating plan without over-spending your day's calorie budget.
- Snack only when you're hungry. Skip the urge to nibble when you're bored, frustrated or stressed. Feed the urge to do something by walking the dog or working in the garden.
- Keep portion control in mind. Have a single-serve container of yogurt or put a small serving of nuts in a bowl. Eating directly from a multiple-serving package can lead to overeating.
- Plan snacks ahead of time. Keep a variety of nutritious ready-to-eat supplies on hand, such as whole-grain crackers and low-fat cheese.

Get creative with the following snack suggestions by swapping out different fruits, vegetables and grains to keep your snacking exciting!

For more healthy eating tips, visit [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org).

# Shopping

## Going to the Grocery Store

HAVE GRAB-N-GO  
SNACKS-  
LEAVE A BOWL OF FRESH  
FRUIT/VEGETABLES ON  
THE TABLE OR  
COUNTERTOP

DESIGNATE A SNACKING  
SHELF -  
DESIGNATE A SHELF  
WHERE KIDS CAN REACH  
HEALTHY SNACKS

When going to the store, have your children help you with the shopping list. They can let you know what food choices they would like and can also help you look up recipes and try new things. This will help get them involved and eating healthy. Children will also look to you for their eating habits. If they see you eating healthy, it will help to teach them what they should be eating. Remember, you control what is being bought at the store. If you bring healthy items into the home and that is what is available to them, then that is what they will eat. Involving your children in picking new recipes and encouraging them to help in the kitchen will promote their healthy eating habits. Suggest that they help you with creating a weekly menu for snacks they would like. This way the snacks will be readily available to them and they will not be looking for something to eat. You can also have a special place for their snacks already pre-portioned out, to avoid overeating.



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