

After School Snacks...Part of Great Nutrition

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Are you looking for ideas to help you be better prepared for when your kids come home from school asking for a snack before the evening meal? Snacks can actually help children get the nutrients needed to grow and maintain a healthy weight. So, why not plan ahead and be prepared with single-serving snacks for younger children to help them get just enough to satisfy their hunger. You can let older kids make their own snacks by keeping healthy foods in the kitchen in easy access.



Here are some tips from the 10 Tips Nutrition Education Series at www.ChooseMyPlate.gov to help you and your kids select a satisfying snack for after school or any time!

1. **Save time by slicing veggies**

Store sliced vegetables in the refrigerator and serve with dips like hummus or low-calorie dressing. Top half a whole-wheat English muffin with spaghetti sauce, chopped vegetables, and low-fat shredded mozzarella and melt in the microwave.

2. **Mix it up**

For older school-age kids, mix dried fruit, unsalted nuts, and popcorn in a snack-size bag for a quick trail mix. Blend plain fat-free or low-fat yogurt with 100% fruit juice and frozen peaches for a tasty smoothie.

3. **Grab a glass of milk**

A cup of low-fat or fat-free milk or milk alternative (soy milk) is an easy way to drink a healthy snack.

4. **Go for great whole grains**

Offer whole-wheat breads, popcorn, and whole-oat cereals that are high in fiber and low in added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium. Limit refined-grain products such as snack bars, cakes, and sweetened cereals.

5. **Nibble on lean protein**

Choose lean protein foods such as low-sodium deli meats or unsalted nuts. Wrap sliced, low-sodium deli turkey around an apple wedge. Store hard-cooked (boiled) eggs in the refrigerator for kids to enjoy any time.

6. **Keep an eye on the size**

Snacks shouldn't replace a meal, so look for ways to help your kids understand how much is enough. Store snack-size bags in the cupboard and use them to control serving sizes.

7. **Fruits are quick and easy**

Fresh, frozen, dried, or canned fruits can be easy "grab-and-go" options that need little preparation. Offer whole fruit and limit the amount of 100% juice served.

8. **Consider convenience**

A single-serving container of low-fat or fat-free yogurt or individually wrapped string cheese can be just enough for an after-school snack.

9. **Swap out the sugar**

Keep healthier foods handy so kids avoid cookies, pastries, or candies between meals. Add seltzer water to a ½ cup of 100% fruit juice instead of offering soda.

10. **Prepare homemade goodies**

For homemade sweets, add dried fruits like apricots or raisins and reduce the amount of sugar in the recipe. Adjust recipes that include fats like butter or shortening by using unsweetened applesauce or prune puree for half the amount of fat.

Find more information about these topics and others, by contacting the Wildcat Extension District offices at: Crawford County, 620-724-8233; Lette County, 620-784-5337; Montgomery County, 620-331-2690; Wilson County, 620-378-2167; Pittsburg Office, Expanded Food and Nutrition Education (EFNEP), 620-232-1930. Wildcat District Extension is on the Web at <http://www.wildcatdistrict.ksu.edu>. Or, like our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/wildcat.extension.district.

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