



PHOENIX CHILDREN'S *Hospital*

# Smart. Snacking for Younger Kids



Snacks are an important part of a child's diet to help meet his/her nutritional needs, so snack foods should be healthy just like meals. But finding healthy snacks that are good for you, taste yummy, and are fun to eat can be hard.

Healthy snacks should be prepared with two (2) or more food groups to ensure balance. But parents shouldn't ban popular snacks such as chips or candy because kids may sneak them anyway. Just buy small amounts and monitor what they are eating and when.

Use this information in this brochure to help you and your children choose smart snacks for a healthy family.

## FOOD GROUPS

### **Grain**

Whole grain is better,  
breads, pasta, cereal and rice

### **Vegetables**

In all colors

### **Fruits**

More whole fruits and less juice

### **Milk**

Choose fat-free or low fat most often

### **Meat and Beans**

Lean meat and poultry, fish, beans, peas,  
nuts and seeds

### **Activity**

60 minutes of exercise every day for everybody

## AT HOME

Smart food choices begin at home. Children learn to eat what is available to them.

- Keep ready-to-eat fruits and vegetables available. Make them part of every meal or a fun snack with a low-fat dipping sauce
- Buy nutritious snacks, such as yogurt, granola bars, or whole grain crackers and low-fat cheese
- Serve lean meats with low fat cheese
- Choose whole-grain crackers or tortilla chips and salsa
- Limit low-nutrient, high calorie snacks such as chips and candy
- Limit sugary soda and fruit-flavored drinks
- Prepare half a sandwich on whole grain bread with vegetables and lean meat
- Have pretzels and dried fruit rather than chips and candy
- Offer sugar free juices or nice cold water as an alternative to soda

## HERE'S HOW

1. Involve children in the shopping process. Let them choose a fruit or vegetable for the week that can be prepared in a snack. This will result in the child being more willing to taste the foods they helped pick at the store.
2. Prepare the fruits and vegetables by getting your child to wash them, cut them into yummy bite size pieces and put them into easy to open baggies.
3. Place fruits and vegetables on the middle shelves of the fridge to ensure that the whole family sees them and it is an easy grab-and-go snack!
4. Have 'mix n match' choices to eat with your fruits and vegetables like low fat cheese sticks, whole grain crackers, low fat yogurt or whole grain cereal. Prepare them in easy to grab snack size baggies too!

## TRY SOME OF THESE ALTERNATIVES

Crackers	whole wheat, low salt with pieces of cheese
Chips	low fat popcorn (older children only) or baggie of fresh fruit or vegetables
Soda	100% fruit juice, low fat flavored milk, water with a slice of citrus
Candy	berries or fruit cut into small pieces with cereal or honey to dip
French Fries	baked potato with low salt sauce (try salsa)
Chicken Nuggets	grilled chicken breast with low fat ranch
Candy Bar	low fat cheese stick and apple pieces or a banana
High Sugar Cereal	whole grain cereal with honey or fresh fruit
PB and J	whole grain bread with low fat peanut butter
Pizza Slice	English muffin with pasta sauce, vegetables and cheese
Pudding Cup	low fat yogurt with crushed nuts on top

## OUR FAVORITES

Decide on smart snacks together – write down your family’s favorites!

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## KIDS NEED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Just like you, your younger child needs physical activity every day. For good health, you and your children should have at least 60 minutes of activity every or most days of the week.

To get your kids moving, find physical activities they can enjoy at their own pace – and become active with them.

For children, there should be allowances on “screen time” including video games, TV and computers. Limit “screen time” to less than 2 hours per day.

- If you are watching television, get active during commercial breaks with games like ‘Mommy says’ or dancing around the living room.
- Do a weekly schedule so that you and your children know what and when they can watch. This helps to set boundaries and eliminate potential tensions.

Turning off the television can allow for more family activity time:

- Replace television time with a family game outside like tag or hide ‘n’ seek. Your children will enjoy extra time with you.
- For hot days, think inside. How about Twister or balloon volleyball over the couch?
- Have your child put on a concert with dancing and singing.
- Go outside and play catch, take the dog for a walk, jump rope. Let each child select an activity they enjoy.



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