

Healthy Snacks

yogurt



grapes



banana



green beans



cheese



peach



apple



carrot



wheat crackers



Healthy Snacks?

The Center for Science in the Public Interest reports snacks are beneficial to children, promoting good nutrition, encouraging lifelong healthful habits and preventing debilitating or deadly diseases. Snacks are especially crucial for children because they are still growing, and healthful snacking at school can lead to better nutrition during foundational years and increased energy and ability to focus.

Importance of Snacking

Snacking is important for children because they have smaller stomachs than adults and cannot necessarily eat enough to stay full in one meal or sitting. They should be able to snack every three to four hours over the course of the day. Snacking throughout the day not only ensures kids stay full, it also helps them learn healthy eating habits, like eating appropriate amounts and only when they're hungry. Small, healthy snacks throughout the day prevent patterns of boredom eating, or eating based on emotional factors.

Healthful Snacking

Children need to be able to refuel throughout the day to maintain energy and focus on academics, and that's where snacking comes in. It's crucial these snacks be health-conscious, as studies show that in states where laws require schools to sell only snacks that meet certain nutrition requirements children gain less weight as they get older. Children may also need to fill in certain nutrient gaps left by meals. Healthy snacks also boost energy, while sugary treats and other junk food can lead to a quick crash and overeating at the next meal.

Smart Snacking Ideas

Healthy eating in childhood helps build a foundation for a lifetime of smart choices. Fruits, veggies, whole grains and low-fat dairy products make good snacks. Healthy beverages include water and 100 percent fruit juices. The majority of snacks should be fruits and vegetables, since most children do not meet the recommended daily servings, and the vitamins in fruits and vegetables are crucial to preventing disease later in life. Portion control is also important; a rounded handful of any snack—100 calories or less—is usually an appropriate amount.

Dangerous School Snacking

Kids need snacks to maintain energy levels throughout the day, but school snacking becomes less beneficial when junk food competes against healthy food for children's attention. Junk food companies aim to target kids because they know they are setting a taste precedent that will stick with them for life. It's crucial for parents to counteract these negative influences with healthful judgment. Less healthy snacks should only be occasional treats for kids.

Sample List of Healthy Snacks for Kids

FRUITS

banana
apple
blueberries
grapes
mango
melon
orange
peach
pear
strawberries
watermelon

VEGETABLES

broccoli
carrots
celery
cucumber
spinach
tomatoes
zucchini

OTHER

string cheese
cheerios
popcorn
peanut butter *
crackers
pretzels
granola bar
apple sauce
yogurt
raisins
lunchable

** Please be aware if there are any peanut allergies in the classroom*