



Let's Eat! Healthier Snacks and Parties

A guide for organizations, schools, and families

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Easy, healthy snack ideas

for school, after school, at work, or hanging out with friends:

- Baked chips & salsa
- Low-fat popcorn
- Pretzels
- Brown rice cakes with peanut butter
- Low-fat trail mix
- Low-fat bean dip & crackers
- Low-fat cheese
- Low-fat cottage cheese & fruit
- Low-fat yogurt
- Low-fat frozen yogurt
- Low-sugar ice pops
- Veggies & low-fat dip
- Low-fat yogurt drink
- Fresh, canned in juice, or frozen fruit
- Low-fat fruit smoothie
- Vanilla wafers or ginger snaps
- Graham crackers
- Frozen 100% juice or fruit bars
- Dried fruit (small, 1/4 cup portion)
- Whole grain crackers with a 100% fruit spread
- Nuts (small, 1/4 cup portion)
- Frozen banana slices dipped in chocolate sauce
- Low-fat milk
- 100% juice mixed with water or seltzer
- Low-fat hot chocolate
- Water



Most of us like to include food in our celebrations. It's fun. It tastes good. Food brings together family and friends and helps us commemorate special holidays and events. Still, many of us eat too much and make less than healthy food choices, resulting in weight gain and increasing our risk for serious health conditions. Does this mean we have to give up snacks and parties? No. It's OK to have cake and ice cream once in a while, just not everyday. We need to make better choices, most of the time, so we live long, healthy lives.



Keys to more healthful food choices

- Aim for balance and moderation. If you eat a high-fat food at one meal, make the rest of your meals low-fat. If you splurge on high calorie, high fat, high sugar foods or beverages at a party, then do better the next day.
 - Eat smaller portions. Large portions add too many calories leading to weight gain.
 - Eat more vegetables and fruits. Research shows that eating a diet rich in vegetables and fruits each day may protect us from stroke, heart disease, diabetes, some cancers, and may help control weight.
 - Choose foods low in fat.
- Choose foods low in sugar, particularly added sugars.
- Choose whole grains, such as whole wheat, whole oats, barley, brown rice, or air-popped, unbuttered popcorn.
- Eat high fat, high sugar foods only once in a while.
- Beware of hidden calories, from sugars or alcohol, in beverages such as soda, fruit drinks, energy drinks, and alcoholic beverages.
- Limit juice to 100% juice and up to $\frac{1}{2}$ of your daily fruit intake. Even though fruit juice is healthful, it lacks the fiber of whole fruit. MyPyramid encourages eating fruit over juice.





Tortilla Pizzas

Make these in a microwave oven for a fast treat.

Supervise children during the cooking process, if they make the recipe.

Serves 1

1 6-inch whole wheat flour tortilla
3 tablespoons tomato or spaghetti sauce
2 tablespoons shredded low-fat cheese (mozzarella, Cheddar, Monterey Jack or other)
2 tablespoons chopped vegetables (optional) - red or green pepper, mushrooms, or onion

1. Place tortilla on a paper plate if using the microwave oven or on a foil-covered tray, if using the regular oven. Preheat the regular oven to 400° F.
 2. Spread tortilla with spaghetti sauce.
 3. Add shredded cheese on top of sauce.
 4. Sprinkle on your favorite low-fat toppings
 5. Cook or bake the tortilla in a microwave oven for 30 seconds or in a regular oven for about 5 minutes, until the cheese melts.
 6. Remove carefully. The plate or tray and food will be hot.
 7. Cool slightly before eating.
- Enjoy.

- Remember to consume other juice drinks in moderation, if at all, since they are often high in sugar.
- Parents can dilute juice with an equal amount of water to reduce the amount of juice that children drink in a day. Young children will not notice the difference.

Do we really need a snack?

Snacks are an important way to get all the nutrients and calories we need during the day. This is especially true for young and active children, who cannot consume all their calorie needs in three meals. Snacks can also keep us from getting so hungry that we overeat.

Healthy snack tips:

- Snacks should be eaten at least 2 hours after a meal and 2 hours before the next meal. It is particularly helpful for young children to have set snack times, for example 10:30 am and 3:30 pm. Snacking constantly results in consuming too many unneeded calories.
- We do not need snacks at every meeting or on every car ride. Water is often enough.
- Make snacking easy by having healthful foods available at home and when away.
- Make your own "grab & go" snacks. For example:
 - Keep washed fruit (apples, oranges, pears, mango) in a bowl on the counter or in the refrigerator.
 - Purchase or prepare bite size veggies and fruits. Store in a bowl or individual plastic bags in the refrigerator.
 - Bag your own portion size pop corn, crackers, pretzels, then store in a container.
 - Wash, dry on paper towels, & then freeze $\frac{1}{2}$ cup portions of blueberries or strawberries in small bags, thaw slightly before eating.
 - Insert a popsicle stick into $\frac{1}{2}$ a banana, roll in chopped nuts or coconut (optional), wrap in foil and freeze. Thaw slightly before eating.
- Serve snacks, such as pretzels, in small individual dishes, rather than putting out a large bowl as a way to control eating and portion sizes.
- Sometimes we think we're hungry, when we are really thirsty. Be sure to drink water or other beverages at meals and throughout the day.
- Serve reasonable beverage portions, about 8 ounces.
- Good choices are: water, low-fat milk, 100% juice, seltzer, low-fat or low sugar yogurt drinks.



Fantastic Fruit Smoothie

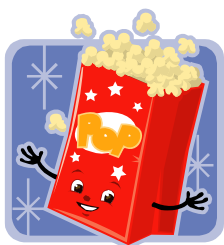
Serves 2

(Choose your favorite in-season, canned, or slightly thawed, frozen fruit.)



1 ripe mango (or other fruit),
cut in small pieces
8 ounces fat free or 1% milk
1 cup low-fat frozen yogurt

Mix in a blender until smooth,
but still thick, or mash the
fruit and then place all
ingredients in a tightly sealed
container. Shake until well
mixed. Pour into 2 glasses.
Enjoy!



Parties

- Keep the focus on fun and conversation rather than eating.
- Plan active parties - dance, play games, volleyball, or tag. Encourage kids to run around.
- Limit food choices, so people don't feel compelled to try some of everything. Who really needs 4 choices of sandwiches and 3 pasta salads?
- Serve small portions of foods. Examples: mini-bagels, half sandwiches, mini muffins, 4-ounce burgers, & small rolls.
- Always serve green salads, fresh veggies and dip, fruit, fresh and/or cooked vegetables.
- Serve small portions of any high-fat or high-sugar foods.
- Always provide water as a beverage choice. Other healthful beverages: low-fat milk, 100% juice, seltzer, & low-fat or low sugar yogurt drinks.



More Information on Healthier Eating and Lifestyles

- Website: www.MyPyramid.gov
- Website: www.rce.rutgers.edu. Click on these:
 - Family and Community Health Sciences
 - 4-H Youth Development
 - Food, Nutrition & Health

Improving Your Health for a Better Tomorrow:
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