

## Healthy School Snacks

### Fruit

Serve whole, sliced, cut in half, cubed, or in wedges. Consider canned, frozen, and dried fruits.

Apples  
Apricots  
Bananas  
Blackberries  
Blueberries  
Cantaloupe  
Cherries  
Grapefruit  
Grapes (red, green, or purple)  
Honeydew Melon  
Kiwis  
Mandarin Oranges  
Mangoes  
Nectarines  
Oranges  
Peaches  
Pears  
Pineapple  
Plums  
Raspberries  
Strawberries  
Tangerines  
Watermelon

**Applesauce (Unsweetened), Fruit Cups, and Canned Fruit** – These have a long shelf life and are low-cost, easy, and healthy if canned in juice or light syrup.

Examples of unsweetened applesauce include Mott's Natural Style and Mott's Healthy Harvest line. Dole and Del Monte offer a variety of single-serve fruit bowls.

**Dried Fruit** - Try raisins, apricots, apples, cranberries, pineapple, papaya, and others with little or no added sugars.

**Frozen Fruit** – Try freezing grapes or buy frozen blueberries, strawberries, peaches, mangoes, and melon.

**Fruit Leathers** – Some brands of fruit snacks are more like candy than fruit, and should be avoided due to their high content of added sugars and

lack of fruit. Brands to *avoid* include Fruit Rollups, Farley's Fruit Snacks, Sunkist Fruit Gems, Starburst Fruit Chews, Mamba Fruit Chews, Jolly Rancher Fruit Chews, Original Fruit Skittles, and Amazin' Fruit Gummy Bears. Try Natural Value Fruit Leathers and Stretch Island Fruit Leathers, which come in a variety of flavors and don't have added sugars.

**Fruit Salad** – Get kids to help make a fruit salad. Use a variety of colored fruits to add to the appeal.

**Popsicles** – Most so-called “fruit” popsicles have added sugars and should be reserved for an occasional treat. Look for popsicles made from 100% fruit juice with no added caloric sweeteners, such as Breyers or Dole “No Sugar Added” fruit bars.

**Vegetables can be served raw with dip or salad dressing:**

Broccoli  
Carrot sticks or Baby Carrots  
Cauliflower  
Celery Sticks  
Cucumber  
Peppers (green, red, or yellow)  
Snap Peas  
Snow Peas  
String Beans  
Tomato slices or grape or cherry tomatoes  
Yellow Summer Squash slices  
Zucchini slices

**Dips** – Try low-fat salad dressings, like fat-free Ranch or Thousand Island, store-bought light dips, bean dips, guacamole, hummus (which comes in dozens of flavors), salsa, or peanut butter.

**Salad** – Make a salad or set out veggies like a salad bar and let the kids build their own salads.

**Soy** - Edamame (pronounced “eh-dah-MAH-may”) are fun to eat and easy to serve. (Heat frozen edamame in the microwave for about 2-3 minutes).

**Veggie Pockets** – Cut whole wheat pitas in half and let kids add veggies with dressing or hummus.

**Ants on a Log** – Let kids spread peanut butter on celery (with a plastic knife) and add raisins.

**Healthy Grains (bread, crackers, cereals, etc.)**

**Note:** Cookies, snack cakes, and chips should be saved for occasional treats, given their poor nutritional quality. trans fat low (*i.e.*, less than 10% of calories, or about one gram or less per serving).

**Whole Wheat English Muffins, Pita, or Tortillas** – Stuff them with

veggies or dip them in hummus or bean dip.

**Breakfast Cereal** – Either dry or with low-fat milk, *whole* grain cereals like Cheerios, Grape-Nuts, Raisin Bran, Frosted Mini Wheats, and Wheaties make good snacks. Look for cereals with no more than 35% added sugars by weight (or roughly 8 grams of sugar per serving).

**Crackers** – Whole-grain crackers like Triscuits, which come in different flavors or thin crisps (or similar woven wheat crackers), Kalwi Rye crackers, or whole wheat Matzos can be served alone or with toppings, like low-fat cheese, peanut butter, or low-fat, reduced-sodium luncheon meat.

**Rice Cakes** - Look for rice cakes made from brown (whole grain) rice. They come in many flavors, and can be served with or without toppings.

**Popcorn** – Look for low-fat popcorn in a bag or microwave popcorn. Or you can air pop the popcorn and season it, *e.g.*, by spraying it with vegetable oil spray and adding parmesan cheese, garlic powder, or other non-salt spices.

**Baked Tortilla Chips** - Baked tortilla chips are usually low in fat, and taste great with salsa and/or bean dip. Look for brands with less sodium.

**Granola and Cereal Bars** - Look for whole grain granola bars that are low in fat and sugars, like Barbara's Granola Bars (cinnamon raisin, oats and honey, and carob chip flavors), Nature Valley Crunchy Granola Bars (cinnamon, oats 'n honey, maple brown sugar, and peanut butter flavors), Nature Valley Chewy Trail Mix Bars (fruit and nut flavor), and Quaker Chewy Granola Bar (peanut butter and chocolate chunk flavor).

**Pretzels, Breadsticks, and Flatbreads** - These low-fat items can be offered as snacks now and then. However, most of these snacks are not whole grain and most pretzels are high in salt.

### **Low-Fat Dairy Foods**

Dairy foods are a great source of calcium, which can help to build strong bones.

However, dairy products also are the biggest sources of artery-clogging saturated fat in kids' diets. To protect children's bones and hearts, make sure all dairy foods served are low-fat or fat-free.

**Yogurt** – Look for brands that are low-fat or fat-free, moderate in sugars (no more than about 30 grams of sugars in a 6-oz. cup), and high in calcium (at least 25% of daily value [DV] for calcium in a 6-oz. cup).

Examples include Danimals Drinkable Low-Fat Yogurt, Go-Gurt by Yoplait, or cups of low-fat or non-fat yogurt from Stonyfield Farm, Dannon, Horizon, and similar store brands. Low-fat or non-fat yogurt also can be served with fresh or frozen fruit or low-fat granola.

**Low-Fat Cheese** - Cheese provides calcium, but often its saturated fat

price tag is too high. Cheese is the number two source of heart-damaging saturated fat in children's diets. Even with low-fat and reduced-fat cheese, be sure to serve with other foods like fruit, vegetables, or whole grain crackers. Choose reduced-fat cheeses like Trader Joe's Armenian Style Braided; Borden or Sargento Light Mozzarella string cheese; Frigo Light Cheese Heads; Kraft Twist-Ums; Polly-O Twisterellas; the Laughing Cow's Light Original Mini Babybel; or Cabot 50% Light Vermont Cheddar.

**Low-Fat Pudding and Frozen Yogurt** - Low-fat or fat-free pudding and frozen yogurt should be served only as occasional treats, because they are high in added sugars.

**Luncheon Meat** – Choose lower-fat, reduced-sodium brands of turkey, ham, and roast beef and serve with whole wheat bread, pita, tortillas (as a wrap sandwich), or crackers. Cut sandwiches in half to make snack-sized portions.

### **Healthy Beverages**

**Water** – **Water should be the main drink served to kids at snack times.**

Water satisfies thirst and does not have sugar or calories. (Plus, it is low-cost for care-givers!) If kids are used to getting sweetened beverages at snack times, it may take a little time for them to get used to drinking water.

**Seltzer** - Carbonated drinks like seltzer, sparkling water, and club soda are healthy options. They do not contain the sugars, calories, and caffeine of sodas. Serve them alone or try making "healthy sodas" by mixing them with equal amounts of 100% fruit juice.

**Low-Fat and Fat-Free Milk** - Milk provides key nutrients, such as calcium and vitamin D. Choose fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk to avoid the heart-damaging saturated fat found in whole and 2% (reduced-fat) milk. It is best to serve fat-free versions of chocolate, strawberry, or other flavored milks to help balance the extra calories coming from added sugars. Single-serve containers of chocolate or other flavored whole or 2% milk drinks can be too high in calories (400-550 calories) and saturated fat (1/3 of a day's worth) to be a healthy beverage for kids.

**Soy and Rice Drinks** - For children who prefer not to drink cow's milk, calcium fortified soy and rice drinks are good choices.

**Fruit Juice** - Buy 100% fruit juice and avoid the added sugars of juice drinks, punches, fruit cocktail drinks, or lemonade. Drinks that contain at least 50% juice and no additional caloric sweeteners are also healthful options. To find 100% juice, look at beverage nutrition labels for the percentage of the beverage that is juice. Orange, grapefruit, and pineapple juices are more nutrient-dense and are healthier than apple, grape, and pear juices. Many beverages like Capri Sun, V8-Splash, Tropicana

Twisters, Sunny Delight, Kool Aid Jammers, Hi-C, or juice drinks from Very Fine, Welch's or Snapple are easily mistaken for juice. However, those beverages are more like soda than juice -- they are merely sugar water with a few tablespoons of added juice.

Fruit juice can be rich in vitamins, minerals, and cancer-fighting compounds.

However, it is high in calories. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children ages 1-6 years old drink no more than 6 ounces (one serving) of juice a day and children ages 7-18 years old drink no more than 12 ounces (two servings) of juice a day.