



# MyPlate snack tips for parents

**Snacks can help children get the nutrients needed to grow.** Prepare snacks that include two or more food groups. For younger children, help them get just enough to satisfy their hunger. Let older kids make their own snacks by keeping healthy foods in the kitchen. Visit [ChooseMyPlate.gov](http://ChooseMyPlate.gov) to help you and your kids select a satisfying snack.

## 1 Save time by slicing veggies

Store sliced vegetables in the refrigerator and serve with hummus. Top half of 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. Put fat-free yogurt, 100% fruit juice, and frozen peaches in a blender to make a tasty smoothie.



## 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, such as applesauce, frozen grapes, or raisins, can be easy "grab-and-go" options that need little preparation. Offer whole fruit and limit the amount of 100% juice served. Choose canned fruits that are lowest in added sugars.



## 3 Grab a glass of milk

A cup of low-fat milk or fortified soy beverage 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.



## 8 Consider convenience

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

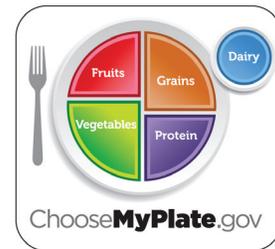
## 5 Snack on protein foods

Choose protein foods such as unsalted nuts and seeds, hummus or other bean dips, and hard-cooked (boiled) eggs for a healthy, easy snack. Store hard-cooked eggs in the refrigerator for up to 1 week for kids to enjoy any time.

## 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.

# be a healthy role model for children



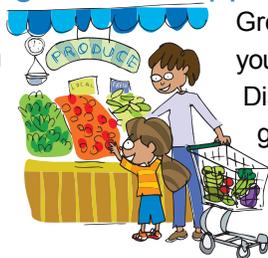
## 10 tips for setting good examples

**You are the most important influence on your child.** You can do many things to help your children develop healthy eating habits for life. Offering a variety of foods helps children get the nutrients they need from every food group. They will also be more likely to try new foods and to like more foods. When children develop a taste for many types of foods, it's easier to plan family meals. Cook together, eat together, talk together, and make mealtime a family time!

### 1 show by example

Eat vegetables, fruits, and whole grains with meals or as snacks. Let your child see that you like to munch on raw vegetables.

### 2 go food shopping together



Grocery shopping can teach your child about food and nutrition. Discuss where vegetables, fruits, grains, dairy, and protein foods come from. Let your children make healthy choices.

### 3 get creative in the kitchen

Cut food into fun and easy shapes with cookie cutters. Name a food your child helps make. Serve “Janie’s Salad” or “Jackie’s Sweet Potatoes” for dinner. Encourage your child to invent new snacks. Make your own trail mixes from dry whole-grain, low-sugar cereal and dried fruit.

### 4 offer the same foods for everyone

Stop being a “short-order cook” by making different dishes to please children. It’s easier to plan family meals when everyone eats the same foods.



### 5 reward with attention, not food

Show your love with hugs and kisses. Comfort with hugs and talks. Choose not to offer sweets as rewards. It lets your child think sweets or dessert foods are better than other foods. When meals are not eaten, kids do not need “extras”—such as candy or cookies—as replacement foods.

### 6 focus on each other at the table

Talk about fun and happy things at mealtime. Turn off the television. Take phone calls later. Try to make eating meals a stress-free time.



### 7 listen to your child

If your child says he or she is hungry, offer a small, healthy snack—even if it is not a scheduled time to eat. Offer choices. Ask “Which would you like for dinner: broccoli or cauliflower?” instead of “Do you want broccoli for dinner?”

### 8 limit screen time

Allow no more than 2 hours a day of screen time like TV and computer games. Get up and move during commercials to get some physical activity.

### 9 encourage physical activity

Make physical activity fun for the whole family. Involve your children in the planning. Walk, run, and play with your child—instead of sitting on the sidelines. Set an example by being physically active and using safety gear, like bike helmets.



### 10 be a good food role model

Try new foods yourself. Describe its taste, texture, and smell. Offer one new food at a time. Serve something your child likes along with the new food. Offer new foods at the beginning of a meal, when your child is very hungry. Avoid lecturing or forcing your child to eat.



# Cut back on your kid's sweet treats

Set your kids on a path for lifelong healthy eating by limiting the amount of added sugars they eat. Sweet treats and sugary drinks have lots of calories but few nutrients. Most added sugars come from sodas; sports, energy, and fruit drinks; cakes; cookies; ice cream; candy; and other desserts.

**1** **Serve small portions**  
Show kids that a small amount of treats can go a long way. Use smaller bowls and plates for these foods and serve them in bite-size portions.

**2** **Sip smarter**  
Soda and other sugar-sweetened drinks contain a lot of sugar and are high in calories. Offer water when kids are thirsty.



**3** **Use the checkout lane that does not display candy**  
Most grocery stores will have a candy-free checkout lane to help avoid temptation. Waiting in a regular checkout lane tempts children to ask for candy that is right in front of them.

**4** **Choose not to offer sweets as rewards**  
By offering food as a reward for good behavior, children learn to think that some foods are better than other foods. Reward your child with kind words and comforting hugs, or give them non-food items, like stickers, to make them feel special.

**5** **Make fruit the first choice**  
Offer a variety of fruits in different ways. Make fruit kabobs using cantaloupe, bananas, and strawberries or offer whole fruits such as pears, clementines, or apples.



**6** **Make food fun**  
Sugary foods that are marketed to kids are advertised as “fun foods.” Make nutritious foods fun by preparing them with your child’s help and being creative together. Create a smiley face with sliced bananas and raisins. Cut fruit into fun and easy shapes with cookie cutters.

**7** **Encourage kids to invent new snacks**  
Make your own snack mixes from dry whole-grain cereal, dried fruit, and unsalted nuts or seeds. Let school-age kids choose the ingredients to create their own snack.



**8** **Play detective in the grocery aisle**  
Show kids how to find the amount of total sugars on the Nutrition Facts label in various cereals, yogurts, and other products. Challenge them to compare products they like and select the one with the lowest amount of sugar.

**9** **Make treats “treats,” not everyday foods**  
Treats are okay once in a while. Just don’t make treat foods an everyday thing. Limit sweet treats to special occasions.

**10** **If kids don’t eat their meal, they don’t need sweet “extras”**  
Keep in mind that candy or cookies should not replace foods that are not eaten at meal time.

# 10 tips

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# kid-friendly veggies and fruits

## 10 tips for making healthy foods more fun for children



**Encourage children to eat vegetables and fruits by making it fun.** Provide healthy ingredients and let kids help with preparation, based on their age and skills. Kids may try foods they avoided in the past if they helped make them.

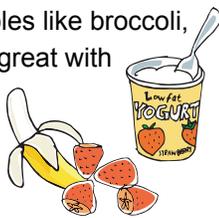
### 1 smoothie creations

Blend fat-free or low-fat yogurt or milk with fruit pieces and crushed ice. Use fresh, frozen, canned, and even overripe fruits. Try bananas, berries, peaches, and/or pineapple. If you freeze the fruit first, you can even skip the ice!



### 2 delicious dippers

Kids love to dip their foods. Whip up a quick dip for veggies with yogurt and seasonings such as herbs or garlic. Serve with raw vegetables like broccoli, carrots, or cauliflower. Fruit chunks go great with a yogurt and cinnamon or vanilla dip.



### 3 caterpillar kabobs

Assemble chunks of melon, apple, orange, and pear on skewers for a fruity kabob. For a raw veggie version, use vegetables like zucchini, cucumber, squash, sweet peppers, or tomatoes.

### 4 personalized pizzas

Set up a pizza-making station in the kitchen. Use whole-wheat English muffins, bagels, or pita bread as the crust. Have tomato sauce, low-fat cheese, and cut-up vegetables or fruits for toppings. Let kids choose their own favorites. Then pop the pizzas into the oven to warm.

### 5 fruity peanut butterfly

Start with carrot sticks or celery for the body. Attach wings made of thinly sliced apples with peanut butter and decorate with halved grapes or dried fruit.

### 6 frosty fruits

Frozen treats are bound to be popular in the warm months. Just put fresh fruits such as melon chunks in the freezer (rinse first). Make “popsicles” by inserting sticks into peeled bananas and freezing.

### 7 bugs on a log

Use celery, cucumber, or carrot sticks as the log and add peanut butter. Top with dried fruit such as raisins, cranberries, or cherries, depending on what bugs you want!

### 8 homemade trail mix

Skip the pre-made trail mix and make your own. Use your favorite nuts and dried fruits, such as unsalted peanuts, cashews, walnuts, or sunflower seeds mixed with dried apples, pineapple, cherries, apricots, or raisins. Add whole-grain cereals to the mix, too.



### 9 potato person

Decorate half a baked potato. Use sliced cherry tomatoes, peas, and low-fat cheese on the potato to make a funny face.

### 10 put kids in charge

Ask your child to name new veggie or fruit creations. Let them arrange raw veggies or fruits into a fun shape or design.



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# food safety tips for preschoolers



## 10 tips to keep food safe and clean

**Keeping your preschooler safe is your number one priority.** Building safe habits will be valuable throughout their lives. Follow these simple tips to keep food safe and clean for your preschooler.

**1 develop a healthy habit for life**  
Encourage handwashing after using the bathroom, before and after eating, after playing with pets, or whenever they are dirty. **Preschoolers are less likely to get sick if they wash their hands often.** Keep a stool by the sink to make handwashing easier.



**2 make handwashing fun!**  
Sing “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star” or the “Alphabet” song or count for 20 seconds each time to make sure your child is washing long enough. Have them pick out a favorite soap to keep them interested.

**3 send a safe, healthy lunch**  
Keep foods cold by adding a frozen juice box or small ice pack to an insulated lunch box. When using paper lunch bags, double bag to help maintain the temperature.

**4 keep hot lunches hot**  
Use an insulated thermos to keep foods like soup warm until lunchtime. Fill your thermos with boiling water and let stand for a few minutes. Then empty the water and fill with piping hot food.



**5 safe snacking**  
Many hands touching snacks can result in the spread of germs. Divide snacks up into small bags or buy single-serve packets. Rinse fruits and vegetables before slicing and serving them as snacks.

**6 stay clean**  
Young children can easily get sick because their immune systems are not fully developed. Keep food and surfaces clean. Wash surfaces before and after you prepare foods like fish, meat, eggs, and cheese for your preschooler.

**7 holiday eggs**  
Hard-cooked eggs are a fun tradition for many families. After boiling eggs, dye them in food-safe coloring and return them to the refrigerator within 2 hours to keep them safe to eat.

**8 some foods are hard to swallow**  
Avoid foods that are hard to swallow or cut them into small pieces, about 1/2 inch. Hard-to-swallow foods can include peanuts, popcorn, round slices of hot dog, hard candy, whole grapes, and cherry tomatoes.



**9 watch how they eat**  
To prevent choking, have your preschoolers sit down when they eat. Avoid letting them run, walk, play, or lie down with food in their mouth.

**10 seafood for preschoolers**  
Omega-3 fats in fish and shellfish have important health benefits for young children. But be aware of chemicals such as mercury. Choices that are often lower in mercury include salmon, sardines, tilapia, trout, pollock, and catfish.

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# physical activity at home, work, and play



## 10 tips to make physical activity a regular part of the day

**Adding activity into your day is possible.** Choose activities that you enjoy. Adults should aim for at least 2½ hours or 150 minutes of physical activity each week. Every little bit adds up, and doing something is better than doing nothing. Most important—have fun while being active!

### 1 take 10

Do at least 10 minutes of activity at a time to reach your weekly goal. Walk the dog for 10 minutes before and after work and add a 10-minute walk at lunchtime.

### 2 mix it up

Start the week with a swim at the pool, take a yoga class during a weekday lunch, lift weights in the evening, and end the week by working in the garden.



### 3 be ready anytime

Keep comfortable clothes and walking or running shoes in the car and at the office.

### 4 find ways to move

Take a brisk walk around the parking lot, jog to the bus stop, or ride your bike to the subway station. If you have an infant or toddler, take a long walk using the stroller and everyone gets some fresh air.



### 5 work out during TV time

Watch a movie while you jog on a treadmill or download a video on your phone and watch while you ride a stationary bike.

### 6 be an active parent

Instead of standing on the sidelines, walk up and down the soccer, football, or softball field while the kids play their game.

### 7 find support

Join a walking group, play wheelchair sports, practice martial arts, or sign up for an exercise class in your community. Recruit family or friends for support.

### 8 enjoy the great outdoors

Tumble in the leaves, build a snowman with your kids, or ski cross-country. Visit a county or national park and spend time hiking, canoeing, or boating.

### 9 look for wellness at work

Find a softball, basketball, or volleyball team at your job. You can also take the lead by starting a wellness or exercise group in your office.

### 10 the chores count, too!

Clean the house, wash the car, or mow the lawn with a push mower. Know that these activities count toward your goal of at least 150 minutes each week.





# Make better beverage choices

**A healthy eating style includes all foods and beverages.** Many beverages contain added sugars and offer little or no nutrients, while others may provide nutrients but too many calories from saturated fat. Here are some tips to help you make better beverage choices.

## 1 Drink water

Drink water instead of sugary drinks. Non-diet soda, energy or sports drinks, and other sugar-sweetened drinks contain a lot of calories from added sugars and few nutrients.



## 2 How much water is enough?

Let your thirst be your guide. Everyone's needs are different. Most of us get enough water from the foods we eat and the beverages we drink. A healthy body can balance water needs throughout the day. Drink plenty of water if you are very active or live or work in hot conditions.

## 3 A thrifty option

Water is usually easy on the wallet. You can save money by drinking water from the tap at home or when eating out.

## 4 Manage your calories

Drink water with and between your meals. Adults and children take in about 400 calories per day as beverages—drinking water can help you manage your calories.

## 5 Kid-friendly drink zone

Make water, low-fat or fat-free milk, or 100% juice an easy option in your home. Have ready-to-go containers available in the refrigerator. Place them in lunch boxes or backpacks for easy access when kids are away from home. Depending on age, children can drink ½ to 1 cup, and adults can drink up to 1 cup of 100% fruit or vegetable juice\* each day.



\*100% juice is part of the Fruit or Vegetable Group.

## 6 Don't forget your dairy\*\*

Select low-fat or fat-free milk or fortified soy beverages. They offer key nutrients such as calcium, vitamin D, and potassium. Older children, teens, and adults need 3 cups of milk per day, while children 4 to 8 years old need 2½ cups and children 2 to 3 years old need 2 cups.

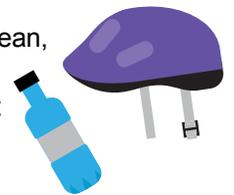


## 7 Enjoy your beverage

When water just won't do—enjoy the beverage of your choice, but just cut back. Remember to check the serving size and the number of servings in the can, bottle, or container to stay within calorie needs. Select smaller cans, cups, or glasses instead of large or supersized options.

## 8 Water on the go

Water is always convenient. Fill a clean, reusable water bottle and toss it in your bag or briefcase to quench your thirst throughout the day. Reusable bottles are also easy on the environment.



## 9 Check the facts

Use the Nutrition Facts label to choose beverages at the grocery store. The food label and ingredients list contain information about added sugars, saturated fat, sodium, and calories to help you make better choices.

## 10 Compare what you drink

Food-A-Pedia, an online feature available at [SuperTracker.usda.gov](http://SuperTracker.usda.gov), can help you compare calories, added sugars, and fats in your favorite beverages.

\*\* Milk is a part of the Dairy Group. A cup = 1 cup of milk or yogurt, 1½ ounces of natural cheese, or 2 ounces of processed cheese.