Healthy Snacks

Tips to Help Your Family Snack Smart:

Plan ahead.
Plan your snacks ahead of time so that you know what ingredients you need.

Pack them ahead of time.
It’s a whole lot easier to remember to take a healthy snack if they are already packed and ready to go!

Let your kids help.
Kids can help wrap foods, put snacks into bags, and clean up afterwards.

Create your own 100-calorie packs.
Instead of buying pre-packaged 100-calorie snacks (which can be expensive and loaded with sugar and salt), buy regular-sized bags (like pretzel sticks). Use the nutrition label to figure out how many items equals 100 calories. Fill 10 sandwich bags with 100 calories worth of snacks.

Quick Snack Ideas:

» ½ banana spread with 1–2 tsp peanut butter
» ½ cup strawberries
» ½ cup of canteloupe cut up into 1 inch cubes
» 30 goldfish crackers
» 1–3 cups of 99% fat free microwave popcorn
» 20 mini Fat-free pretzels
» 10 flavored mini rice cakes
» Celery slices dipped in 2 Tbsp of low fat ranch dressing
» ½ of a small apple cut into slices and dipped into light yogurt
» Carrot or pepper sticks dipped into ¼ cup of hummus
A sugary drink is a drink with sugar added. These drinks include sodas, juices, flavored milk and milk alternatives, sports drinks, energy drinks, and blended coffees and teas. Kids who drink one or more sugary drinks a day have a higher risk of being overweight, and sweetened drinks can lead to tooth decay.

6 Easy Tips to Help Your Family Cut Down on Sugary Drinks

1. Serve Water
Water is always the best choice, so let it flow at home. Not only is water calorie-free, but drinking it teaches kids to use water as a thirst-quencher. To change things up, try seltzer, add cut-up fruit such as lemons or limes, or try seltzer or water flavored with natural fruit essences.

2. Stick to Skim or 1% Low Fat Milk
Low fat (1%) and skim milk contain just as many nutrients as whole milk but with little or no fat.

3. Just a Little Juice
If your child likes juice, be sure to serve 100% juice. Fruit juice still has a lot of sugar, so limit it to just a few times a week and keep servings to about 4 ounces a day.

4. Limit Soda
Soda contains “empty calories,” meaning it has no nutritional value and can lead to weight gain. One can of soda contains nearly 10 packs of sugar! Diet sodas contain artificial sweeteners, and many sodas contain caffeine, which is not safe for young children.

5. Say No to Energy & Sports Drinks
Energy drinks contain sugar as well as a lot of caffeine, which can be dangerous. Sports drinks are also high in sugar and are not necessary unless your older children are vigorously active for prolonged amounts of time in high temperatures (such as participating in a soccer game in hot weather).

6. Serve Less
Many sugary drinks are supersized and pack a lot of sugar and calories. Encourage your children to choose smaller portions of sugary drinks.
Introducing New Foods to Kids

Tips for Helping Kids Eat (and Like!) New, Healthy Foods

Start young.
The best time to form lifelong healthy eating habits is when kids are very young. Offer a variety of foods on a regular basis.

Pair the new with the familiar.
Instead of serving an entirely new meal, pair one new food with meals your child already enjoys. For example, cut up green beans and serve with macaroni and cheese.

Start small.
Start by serving a small amount of the new food and let your child know they can have more if they choose. Also, offer the new food before the rest of the meal, when your child is the hungriest.

Separate new ingredients.
If your child likes plain food, try serving the ingredients of a casserole separately before introducing it all together.

Make it FUN.
Choose colorful foods like tri-colored pasta or cut food into fun shapes with a cookie cutter. Encourage your child to make a happy face with the new food before trying it. Keep it interesting.
Choosing smart, fun snacks and meals for your family is a great way to get them excited about eating healthy and trying new foods!

**Bagel Caterpillar**

Split mini bagels in half. Cut each half into half circles. Spread the halves with toppings like tuna salad, egg salad, or peanut butter. Decorate with sliced cherry tomatoes or banana slices. Arrange the half circles to form the body of a caterpillar. Use olives or raisins for the eyes.

**Frozen Bananas & Frozen Juice Cups**

Put a wooden stick into a peeled banana. Cut large bananas in half first. Wrap in plastic wrap and freeze. Once frozen, peel off the plastic and eat. You can also pour 100% fruit juice into small paper cups. Freeze. To serve, peel off the paper and eat.

**Frozen Graham Cracker Sandwiches**

Mix mashed bananas and peanut butter, spread between graham crackers and freeze for a few hours.

**Fruit Smoothies**

Blend fresh or frozen fruit with low-fat yogurt and milk or 100% juice. Try 100% orange juice, low-fat yogurt and frozen strawberries.

**Ants on a Log**

Thinly spread peanut butter on narrow celery sticks. Top with a row of raisins or other diced dried fruit.

**Smiley Sandwiches**

Top a slice of bread with peanut butter and use an apple slice for a smile and raisons for the eyes.
Pulling together a family meal can get stressful. But starting good eating habits while kids are young can lead to a lifetime of healthy eating.

That’s why it’s important to set the stage early for kids to enjoy mealtimes and have a good relationship with food. You have the ability to make meals less stressful for you and more fun for the whole family!

**Set aside at least 20 minutes for the meal**

This will give you and your family plenty of time to relax, try different foods, and talk about things that matter to you. Also, taking 20 minutes for a meal can also help your family cut back on over-eating. It takes 20 minutes for the message to travel from your belly to your brain that you’re full!

**Turn off the TV and computer**

Distractions like TV, phones or computer games during a meal make it harder to talk as a family. Turning it off allows you to have pleasant discussions about the days events.

**Sit Down**

Time things as best as you can so that you finish cooking and sit at the table with everyone else — it makes for a better experience for everyone.

**Be a Role Model**

Remember that you’re teaching your children habits that will stay with them for the rest of their lives. Be a role model by eating healthy food choices at the meal, putting your phone away, and being fully present at the meal.

**Let your kids help you**

This will not only help you, but it helps your kids become more interested in their food and the meal. Let them help you shop for food, make some choices about which foods to serve, or help set the table.
Be Active as a Family
Whenever, Wherever, However!

Indoors

Being indoors doesn’t mean you can’t be active. There are lots of things you can do in small spaces to get kids moving more and having fun!

» Build an obstacle course in the living room, basement or garage with couch cushions and pillows
» March up and down the stairs
» Create a Dance Party where each family member teaches their own dance
» Act out story time — use simple household items for props
» Combine moving and learning: Sort kitchen containers by size, color, and shape or fold laundry and arrange piles by color

Outdoors

Jogging isn’t the only thing you can do outdoors to be active! There are lots of little things you can do with your kids outside that will get you all moving more while spending quality time together.

» Plant a garden: help everyone plant their own vegetables, fruits and flowers
» Take a nature hike or climb
» Run, jog, and walk in a family treasure hunt
» Wash the car, or play an active game an active game with the hose
» Go to a park for a walk or to play catch, Frisbee or kick ball
Any movement is good movement.
If you think a small living space or yard means no room for physical activity, think again!

Build an indoor obstacle course.
Turn a walk across a small room into an obstacle course. Use safe items like couch cushions and pillows to stack and scatter for jumping over, falling into, and weaving through.

Physically active story time.
Forget the old fashion “sit and listen” story time. Have your kids stand up and act out a story as you read aloud. Use simple household items for props. Stuffed animals make great supporting actors!

Combine movement and learning any chance you get.
Have your child sort kitchen containers by size, color, and shape. Kids can help fold laundry and arrange clothes into piles by color and then count the piles.

Move more while eating better.
Make up simple songs and dances for preparing family meal favorites. Have an after-dinner “stand up and wiggle” session to help digestion.

Stretch!
Kids get stressed, too. Put on relaxing music, take deep breathes, and lead a stretching session the whole family can benefit from.

Moving while moving.
When you’re in the car, turn up the tunes — kids can raise their hands.