

Healthy Food Ideas

School Snacks, Celebrations and Family Events

Snack time, celebrations and family events are great opportunities to promote a healthy lifestyle, provide consistent messages and create excitement around nutritious choices. When food is a part of the school day or a special event, offer a variety of healthy options including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat/fat-free dairy products and water.

ACTION FOR HEALTHY KIDS

TIP SHEET



Fruits

- Fresh whole or sliced fruit assortment
- Fruit salad or kabobs
- Dried fruit or 100% fruit leathers
- Frozen fruit (try frozen grapes!)
- Sliced apples with cinnamon
- Unsweetened applesauce
- 100% fruit popsicles
- Banana pops — bananas, sliced in half, popsicle sticks inserted, rolled in yogurt and whole grain cereal toppings and frozen

Grains

- Low-fat popcorn
- Whole-grain bagel slices, muffins or pita with hummus or peanut butter
- Low-fat breakfast or granola bars

Low-Fat & Fat-Free Dairy

- String cheese
- Yogurt (try squeezable!)
- Yogurt smoothies or parfaits

Vegetables

- Raw vegetables (baby carrots, sugar snap peas, sliced bell peppers and more) with low-fat dip
- Celery topped with peanut butter and raisins or low-fat cream cheese and 100% fruit preserves
- Edamame — boiled soybeans served in the pods
- Dips: hummus, salsa, bean dip, honey mustard, low-fat ranch, low-fat yogurt

Drinks

- Water
- 1% low-fat or fat-free milk
- 100% fruit juice
- Sparkling punch (seltzer and 100% juice)

WARNING: A small but growing number of kids have severe peanut and/or tree nut allergies. Before bringing in peanuts, peanut butter, or other nuts as a snack, make sure none of the children has an allergy.



Every kid healthy, active and ready to learn

ActionforHealthyKids.org • 600 W. Van Buren St., Suite 720, Chicago, IL 60607 • 800.416.5136

Healthy Food Ideas

Make Health the Expectation

- Promote fruits and vegetables by arranging them in a visually-appealing way to draw the attention of kids and families.
- If sweets or other treats are present, offer them in small portion sizes with other, healthier foods that balance out the meal. Try cutting treats in half.
- Create sign-up sheets that list items like fruits, vegetables, whole grain crackers, low-fat/fat-free yogurt, cheese and milk — and don't forget the water. Include one line for a parent to bring in a less nutritious, more traditional party treat (which is an opportunity to teach moderation), or eliminate that option entirely. Alternatively, instead of sign-up sheets, send home a list of suggestions for healthy party snacks (check for food allergies before serving).

Get Kids in on the Act

Parents can bring in the ingredients and kids can make their own:

Trail Mix: pretzels, dried fruit, whole grain-low sugar cereals, sunflower or sesame seeds, etc.

Fruit Salad: apples, oranges, strawberries, blueberries, bananas, kiwi, pineapple, etc.

Mix it up!

- Air-popped popcorn with nuts and dried fruit
- Low-fat cheese on whole grain crackers
- Graham crackers with peanut butter
- Sliced apples with low-fat cheese slices
- Whole-grain pizza with low-fat toppings
- Whole-grain pancakes topped with fruit
- Wraps with low-fat ingredients
- Quesadillas or bean burritos with salsa
- Low-fat cottage cheese with fruit
- Baked tortilla chips with salsa or bean dip
- Trail/cereal mix (low-fat/low sugar)
- Fruit-n-cheese pretzel kabobs
- Whole-grain rice cakes topped with bananas or other fruit
- Low-sodium sliced turkey wrapped around slices of cucumber, bell peppers or carrots
- Mini sandwiches cut into fun shapes with cookie cutters

Edible Art

Get creative! "Watermelon Turtles" are hollowed-out watermelons carved to look like turtles and filled with fruit. "Veggie-Head Bagels" are mini whole grain bagels spread with low-fat cream cheese and decorated with small pieces of veggies like broccoli, carrots and peppers to create fun faces. Edible "food art" can be created using a variety of healthy foods. Kids will have a blast making and eating the good-for-you treats.



Action for Healthy Kids® is a nationwide grassroots network mobilizing school professionals, families and communities to take actions that improve school foods, nutrition education, physical activity and physical education for all students. Through funding opportunities, expert technical assistance, and our flagship program, Game On, Action for Healthy Kids supports schools in becoming healthier places where children thrive.

