



Healthy Snacks for Pre-Schoolers

No one food provides all the nutrients needed to stay healthy. So it's best to eat a variety of foods every day. Using the **Food Guide Pyramid** can help you eat better. Start with plenty of breads, cereals, rice and pasta and fruits and vegetables. Add two to three servings from the milk, yogurt and cheese group and two to three servings from the meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, eggs and nuts group. Use fats, oils and sweets in moderation.

If your child is still growing, don't be alarmed if he doesn't eat as much as you think he should. Studies show that children will eat what they need when they are hungry.

How Many Servings Do Young Children Need Each Day?

Bread, Cereal, Rice & Pasta Group	6
Fruit & Vegetable Group	5
Milk, Yogurt & Cheese Group	3
Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs & Nuts Group	2

Serving Sizes for Children

Meat, Poultry, Fish, Dry Beans, Eggs & Nuts

1 egg

2-6 tablespoons cooked meat, poultry or fish

1/8-1/2 cup cooked beans

1-2 tablespoons peanut butter

Fruits & Vegetables

1/4-1 medium whole fruit

1/4-3/4 cup juice

1/8-1/2 cup canned fruit or cooked vegetable

1/4-1 cup tossed salad

Bread, Cereals, Rice & Pasta

1/2-1 slice bread

1/8-1/2 cup cooked cereal, rice or pasta

Milk

1 cup milk (1/2-3/4 cup portions)

8 ounces yogurt (1/2-3/4 cup portions)

1-2 ounces cheese

As children enter the preschool years, their appetites and stomachs are so small that they often can't eat enough at their regular meals to meet their daily calorie demands. So snacks are an important part of a child's food intake and need to be nutritious. A snack does not have to be as large as a regular serving.

Appropriate Snacks for Children Over Two

Food safety issues are even more important for preschoolers because their immune system is not yet fully developed. Proper hand washing techniques and correct refrigeration and cooking temperatures are all essential during the preparation and storage of snacks.

Fresh Fruit: Apple wedges; orange, grapefruit or tangerine slices (seedless, fresh or canned); cantaloupe or watermelon chunks or balls; seedless grapes; pear or peach slices (fresh or canned); pineapple chunks (fresh or canned); strawberries; blueberries; blackberries; a banana; dried apples, apricots, peaches, or pears; pitted plums.

Raw Vegetables: Cucumber or turnip slices or sticks; celery or carrot sticks; cherry tomatoes cut in half; green pepper rings or sticks; cabbage wedges; cauliflower or broccoli flowerets; mushrooms; zucchini or summer squash strips or slices.

Unsweetened Fruit & Vegetable Juices: Apple, cranberry, grape, orange, grapefruit, pineapple or tomato juice.



Breads & Cereals: Unsweetened dry cereals; saltine, round or whole-grain crackers; pretzels; bread sticks; toasted bread with margarine; cinnamon toast; pizza slices; English muffin halves; split and toasted rolls that are spread with peanut butter.

Protein Foods: Meat sticks; Vienna sausages*; sandwich meat roll-ups*; cubes of spam, Treet or other canned meats*; chicken, ham or tuna salad fillings for small sandwiches or celery sticks; smooth peanut butter on small sandwich, crackers, celery, banana or apple; hard cooked eggs. (*These foods are high in sodium and fat and should be used in moderation.)

Milk & Dairy Products: Milk; chocolate milk; yogurt; cheese cubes or slices (use mild flavors); cottage cheese; ice cream (not flavored ice on a stick).

References

- The Joy of Snacks. Nancy Cooper, 1991.
- The Food Guide Pyramid. H&G Bulletin 252, USDA, 1992.
- Healthy Treats and Super Snacks for Kids. Penny Warner, 1985.

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Recipes ~ The Power of Healthy Snacking for Kids

Trees in a Broccoli Forest

Broccoli Trees:

- 2 carrots, peeled
- 3 cups broccoli florets
- 4 cherry tomatoes
- 3 tablespoons parsley leaves

Dipping Sauce:

- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup plain non-fat yogurt
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup light sour cream
- 2 teaspoons honey
- 2 teaspoons spicy brown mustard

To prepare dipping sauce, combine all ingredients in a small bowl. To make trees, hold carrots against cutting board and trim off ends. Cut each in half, crosswise, then lengthwise, to make four pieces. Arrange each plate by putting two carrot pieces side-by-side in the center. Arrange broccoli around the carrots forming a cluster. Arrange the tomato at the top of the plate. Spoon dip around the base of carrots and sprinkle with parsley.

77 Calories; 4g protein; 13g carbohydrate; 2g fat

Hubana! (Human + Banana)

Banana
Peanut butter
Dried apricot half
Grated carrots (optional)
Raisins, dried cranberries, or other dried fruits of choice
Shelled sunflower seeds
Peel banana half-way down. On the very top, place a dab of peanut butter and place the apricot half on top. This is the hat. Place

grated carrots on the peanut butter for hair. Dab peanut butter on the banana where you want the eyes, nose and mouth to go. Stick on sunflower seeds, raisins, dried cranberries or other fruits to make the face.

177 Calories; 4g protein; 17g carbohydrate; 1g fat

Huckleberry Houndog

1 cup skim milk
1 cup low-fat boysenberry yogurt
1 cup apple juice
Whirl ingredients in a blender until smooth.
110 Calories; 4g protein; 21g carbohydrate; 1g fat

Hurricane

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup drained canned pineapple chunks
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pineapple juice
2 drained canned peach halves, diced
1 cup vanilla or plain low-fat yogurt
1 cup skim milk
Pour all ingredients into a blender and whirl, like a hurricane, until smooth and thick.
120 Calories; 6g protein; 23g carbohydrate; 1g fat

Mermaid Milk Shake

1 cup skim milk
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup chopped fresh or frozen, then thawed, strawberries
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup orange juice
6-ounces low-fat strawberry yogurt
Combine all ingredients in a blender and whirl until smooth. Serve with a paper umbrella or a paper flower for fun.
88 Calories; 4g protein; 17g carbohydrate; 1g fat

Recipes adapted by Sandra Bastin, Food & Nutrition Specialist from Healthy Treats & Super Snacks for Kids, Penny Warner, 1994.

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