



Smart Snack Strategies

Plan snacks as part of daily food choices

- Provide snack choices from several food groups
- Schedule regular snack times and amounts; don't let children nibble constantly during the day

Be a label detective

- Limit convenience-type snacks that are high in sugar, fat, and salt and use excessive packaging

Create snack stations

- Package your own ready-to-go snacks
- Allow children to make their own snacks

Provide chef-in-training opportunities

- Let youngsters help pick out fruits, vegetables, and cheeses when shopping
- Include children in snack food preparation
- Use snacks to introduce new foods

Bottom line

- Healthy snacks supply energy and help meet a child's daily nutrition requirement
- Do-it-yourself snacks help children practice independence

Snacks for Healthy Kids

Kids are experts at snacking

According to a United States Department of Agriculture study, after-school snacks provide about one-fourth of children's calories. Because children have smaller stomachs, they need the energy and nutrients provided by these mini-meals. However, when high fat, high sugar snack foods are combined with screen time—either TV or computer—instead of active play time, children are likely to gain more weight than they should for optimum health.

Be a role model

Behaviors of parents and family members can have an impact on a child's perception of food and their habits. Some of these behaviors have been associated with childhood obesity. For example, if an adult restricts highly-palatable foods (high fat or sugar foods), skips breakfast, or pressures a child, there is greater likelihood the child may become overweight or obese or have a poor relationship with food.

Ensuring a child is receiving adequate nutrients in their diet is important. However, setting a good example and being a role model for children is also very important. Parents and family members can set the stage for children by practicing healthy eating behaviors (i.e. eating vegetables, exercising, and enjoying breakfast). Children learn most by seeing and doing.

Food should never be used as a reward for good behavior, or withheld as punishment for bad behavior. Use activities and play time as rewards.

Distinguish between food facts and myths

Current research does not support claims that sugar and food colors are linked to hyperactivity, criminal behavior, or increased anxiety. However, meal-skipping, especially breakfast, has been shown to harm children's performance in school.

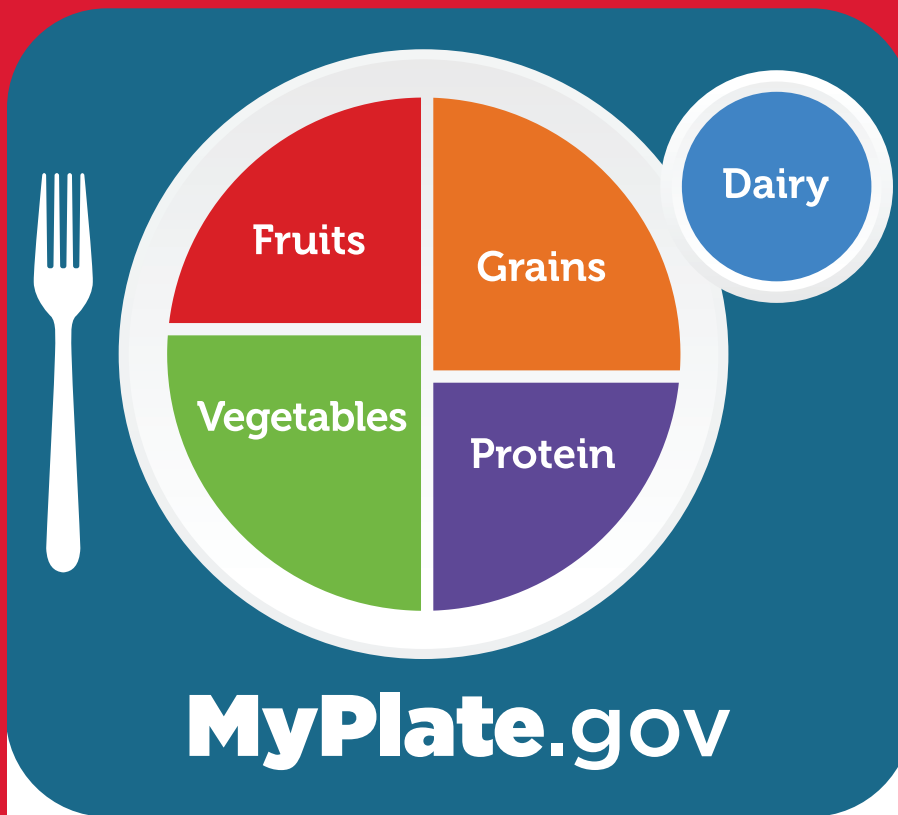
Focus on physical activity as well as food

All children benefit from physical activity—walking, riding bikes, or playing together is a great way to build family communication. If your child shows a tendency toward being overweight, encourage more physical activity and less screen time at the television or computer. Do not cut back drastically on food intake. Children need those nutrients for growth and development.



Plan snack choices

Offer snacks that fulfill part of the daily recommendation for these food groups.



Be a label detective

For snacks that do not fit in the MyPlate groups, examine the sugar, fat, and sodium content on the label.

Choose more snacks that have

- 2 or more grams of fiber
- 10% of the Daily Value for one of the following:
 - Vitamin A
 - Vitamin C
 - Calcium
 - Iron
 - Fiber

Choose fewer snacks that have

- 10% or more of the Daily Value for total fat
- 10% or more of the Daily Value for sodium
- 10% or more of the Daily Value for added sugars
- Remember that every 4 grams equal 1 teaspoon of sugar.

	2–8 YEARS (CHILDREN 2–8 YEARS NEED ABOUT 1000–2000 CALORIES)	9–13 years (FEMALES NEED ABOUT 1400–2200 CALORIES PER DAY AND MALES NEED ABOUT 1600–2600 CALORIES PER DAY.)	14–18 years (FEMALES NEED ABOUT 1800–2400 CALORIES PER DAY AND MALES NEED ABOUT 2000–3200 CALORIES PER DAY)
GRAINS	3–6 ounce equivalent	5–9 ounce equivalent	6–10 ounce equivalent
VEGGIES	1–2½ cups	1½–3½ cups	2½–4 cups
FRUITS	1–2 cups	1½–2 cups	1½–2½ cups
OIL	3–5 teaspoons	3½–7 teaspoons	5–10 teaspoons
DAIRY	2–2½ cups	3 cups	3 cups
PROTEIN	2–5½ ounce equivalent	5–7 ounce equivalent	4–6½ ounce equivalent

Create snack stations

To help children practice making snack choices, some families set up snack areas in the refrigerator and in a kitchen cupboard. Children are allowed to choose from either.

Yummy help-yourself cupboard snacks

Place these on a shelf in a cupboard that children can reach.

Fruits

- 100% fruit roll-ups
- Apple rings, dried
- Apricots, dried
- Banana halves
- Prunes, pitted
- Raisins
- Cranberries, dried
- Pineapple, dried

Protein

- Peanut butter
- Roasted soynuts or pumpkin seeds
- Sunflower seeds
- Almonds
- Trail mix

Grains

- (Choose whole grain options most often; look for whole grain as the first ingredient.)
- Bagel
- Banana bread
- Breadstick
- Bread, whole grain or enriched Cereal pieces, low sugar (such as Cheerios®, Chex®, Crispix®)
- Cookies
- Cornbread
- Crackers (animal, graham, oyster, whole grain)
- English muffin
- Granola, low fat
- Muffins, low fat
- Pita bread
- Popcorn*
- Pumpkin bread
- Pretzel, soft
- Raisin bread
- Vanilla wafers
- Whole wheat tortillas

Chilly help-yourself refrigerator snacks

Place these snacks in a storage bin or on a shelf in the lower part of the refrigerator so that children can reach them. Also, be sure children have access to water in a cup or bottle.

Vegetables

- Baby carrots*
- Cauliflowerettes, slightly cooked, chilled
- Celery sticks*
- Celery stuffed with peanut butter or cheese*
- Green or red pepper pieces*
- Vegetable juices
- Cherry tomatoes*
- Zucchini pieces*
- Ranch Dip (See page 4)

Fruits

- Apple wedges*
- Apple wedges, peeled
- Applesauce
- Apricots, fresh or canned
- Banana chunks
- Fruit slushes
- Fruitsicles, frozen
- Grapes, seedless*
- 100% juice boxes
- Kiwi halves
- Melon pieces
- Nectarine, fresh
- Orange sections
- Tangerine segments
- Peach or pear pieces, fresh or canned in juice
- Pineapple chunks
- Plums, fresh or canned
- Strawberries

Dairy

- (Choose low-fat milk options most often.)
- Cheese cubes or slices
- String cheese
- Fruit yogurt
- Milk, plain or flavored
- Pudding cups
- Cottage cheese

Protein

- Hard-cooked egg

Super snacks in seconds

Here are some examples of how you and your child could combine foods from the two snack stations for a nutritious snack:

- Oatmeal cookies and milk
- Raw vegetables and cheese dip
- Cheese and crackers
- Cottage cheese and fresh fruit
- Raisin bread toast and fruit juice
- Pears or apples, cheese, and milk
- Hard-cooked egg and cherry tomatoes
- Fresh fruit with yogurt dip
- Kabobs made with fruit and cheese
- String cheese and fruit juice
- Celery with peanut butter and fruit juice
- Sliced apple with peanut butter dip and fruit juice

* **Caution: These foods may cause choking in children under the age of 5**

Money Saving Tip

Make your own ready-to-go snacks by portioning them into small plastic bags or reusable plastic containers.



Three Tips When Planning a Snack

1. Add some protein (nuts, peanut butter, dairy) to your snack to keep you full and satisfied.
2. Put your snack on a plate or in a bowl! If you eat directly from the bag or box, you will end up eating more.
3. Practice mindful eating. Eat snacks in a quiet space where you can focus on eating. Take time to taste and enjoy your food.

Simple and Smart Snack Swaps

The next time you look in your fridge or pantry, try switching a few of your go-to snacks with foods that can provide energy and taste great.

INSTEAD OF THAT....	SWAP IT FOR THIS!
Fruit Favored Yogurt	Plain Greek Yogurt with Fresh Fruit
Can of Pop	Can of Sparkling Water
Chips (Cheetos®, Doritos®, Lays®)	Stovetop Popcorn, Pretzels, Triscuits®, Trail Mix (nuts, raisins, Cheerios, and chocolate chips),
Chocolate Chip Cookies	Chocolate Chip Teddy Grahams®
Sugary Cereals (>10g sugar/serving)	Moderate Sugar Cereals (<10g sugar/serving) (Life®, Honey Nut Cheerios®, Kix®, Chex®)
Hard Candy	Frozen Grapes*
Frozen Icy Pop	Frozen 100% Juice Pops
Ice Cream	Frozen Yogurt or Pudding Pops
Carrots* and Ranch Dip	Carrots* and Guacamole Dip

*Choking hazard for small children.

The Benefits of Stovetop Popcorn

1. Control the amount of oil and salt you use.
 - Less is more! Using oil to coat the pan gives popcorn a simple flavor that doesn't need extra salt or butter.
2. Choose healthier oils (olive oil, canola oil, corn oil).
 - Oils can provide satiety and also be heart healthy.
3. Increase your fiber intake.
 - Popcorn is a great source of fiber. One serving (3.5 cups of popped kernels) has about 4g of fiber!
4. Decrease waste.
 - Stovetop popcorn eliminates sending another microwave popcorn bag to the landfill.



Check These Resources

- Center for Science in the Public Interest—www.cspinet.org
- Produce for Better Health Foundation - Healthy Kids—fruitsandveggies.org/stories/get-kids-involved/
- Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Nutrition and Wellness—www.extension.iastate.edu/humansciences/nutrition
- Iowa State University Extension Store—store.extension.iastate.edu
- Live Healthy Iowa—www.livehealthyiowa.org
- MyPlate for Kids—www.myplate.gov/life-stages/kids

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STOVETOP POPCORN

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ½ cup yellow or white popcorn kernels
- Salt, to taste
- Toppings of your choice

Instructions:

1. Heat oil in a large stock pot on medium-high heat.
2. Place one or two single kernels into the pot. When the kernel pops the oil is hot enough to add the remaining kernels.
3. Add remaining popcorn kernels and cover with lid. Shake the pot gently over the burner to prevent burning.
4. Allow popcorn to pop until popping slows (only 2–3 pops within 15 seconds or less; don't wait too long or the kernels will burn).
5. Remove the pot from heat.
6. Pour popcorn into a bowl.
7. Consider adding toppings (see below) for a little pizzazz.

MAKES: 14 cups | **SERVES:** 4 | **SERVING SIZE:** 3.5 cups



Nutrition Facts

4 servings per recipe
Serving size 3.5 cups (36g)

Amount per serving
Calories 170

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 8g	10%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
<i>Trans</i> Fat –g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 0mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 23g	8%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 0g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 4g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 2mg	0%
Iron 1mg	6%
Potassium 96mg	2%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Nutrition Facts

4 servings per recipe
Serving size 3.5 cups (61g)

Amount per serving
Calories 290

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 12g	15%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 120mg	5%
Total Carbohydrate 36g	13%
Dietary Fiber 5g	18%
Total Sugars 8g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 9g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 35mg	2%
Iron 3mg	15%
Potassium 107mg	2%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Nutrient Analysis Trail Mix Popcorn >>

Popcorn Pizazz!

Try these topping ideas to spice up your fiber-rich snack late in the afternoon or before turning on your favorite movie!

Make a trail mix!

- Add ¼ cup of M&Ms
- Add ½ cup classic peanuts
- Add ½ cup goldfish (or any crunchy snack item)
- Add ½ cup Cheerios

Make it Spicy!

- 1 tablespoons smoked paprika
- 1 tablespoons chili powder
- Dash of cayenne

Make it Savory!

- 1 tablespoons grated Parmesan

Make it sweet!

- Sprinkle 2 tablespoons dark chocolate chips

Recipes modified from <https://thegourmeitr.com/stove-top-popcorn>