

**“Eating smaller portions of healthy foods frequently, every three hours or so, actually causes your body to burn more calories throughout the day. When choosing snacks, look for whole grains, fruits and vegetables, lean proteins and low-fat dairy products. ”**

— Lori Mooney, RD, LD,  
a dietitian for the Center for Healthy Weight & Nutrition  
at Nationwide Children's Hospital



# Healthy and delicious snack ideas

Does hunger strike midway through the morning? Do your kids always get the munchies right after school? Snacking between meals sometimes gets a bad rap, but snacking is actually a healthy way to keep from overeating at meal time and it can speed up your metabolism. On the other hand, eating infrequently or skipping meals causes your body to go into starvation mode and actually slows down your metabolism.

## Snacking tips:

Make sure you snack from all five food groups throughout the week. Check out these great options:

- **Milk group** – pudding, yogurt, cheese, milk, cottage cheese
- **Meat group** – tuna, egg or chicken salad, hard-boiled eggs, peanut butter, bean dip
- **Fruit group** – fresh fruits (apples, bananas, blueberries, cherries, clementines, grapes, etc.), dried fruit (apricots, dates, peaches, prunes, raisins), and fruit canned in its own juice with no added sugar
- **Vegetable group** – broccoli, carrots, celery, cucumber, cauliflower, sugar snap peas, green peppers
- **Grain group** – bagels or bagel chips, unsweetened cereal, crackers, English muffins, flat bread, wheat bread, plain tortilla

## Combine two groups.

Snacks should be a combination of two food groups. Try these combinations from the list above:

- Celery with peanut butter
- Graham crackers dipped in yogurt
- Apple slices dipped in yogurt
- Tortilla filled with chicken salad
- Half a bagel with low-fat cream cheese

## QUICK SNACK FIX: FRUIT AND YOGURT SMOOTHIE

- 1/2 cup of your child's favorite fruit
- 3/4 cup low fat vanilla yogurt
- 1 cup 1 percent or skim milk

Cut fruit into small pieces. Blend all ingredients in a blender until smooth. Add ice to thicken into a frosty treat.



## Plan ahead.

Prepare healthy snacks the night before or in the morning, and keep them handy. When hunger strikes, you won't go for high-fat, high-sugar snacks out of desperation.

## In the mood for a sweet snack?

Place slices of fruit on a stick and freeze for frozen fruit treats. They're great, especially in the summertime.

## Don't forget to drink lots of water.

Thirst is often confused with hunger. Staying hydrated also reduces headaches and fights fatigue.

Experts from the Center for Healthy Weight and Nutrition at Nationwide Children's Hospital provided the information for this column.