

Family Keys

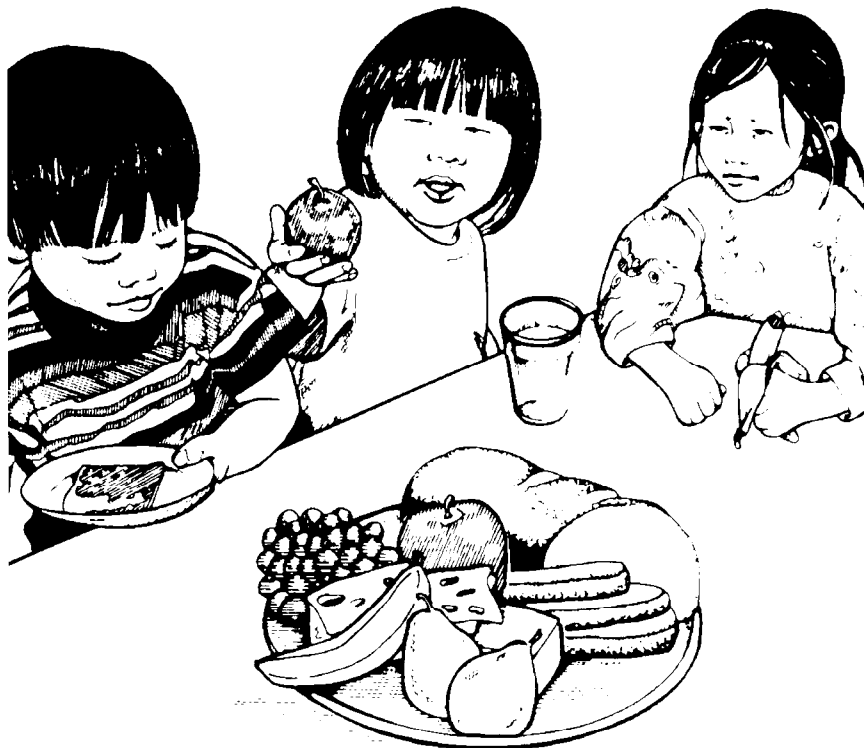
Self-Care Resources for Children & Their Families

Nutritious Snacks

12

KEY

Snacking is a way of life for many people, and not necessarily a bad habit — especially for children. Children have high energy needs because many are very active and their bodies are growing rapidly.



Parents can help:

You establish nutritional habits by the snacks you allow your child to eat. These habits can last a lifetime.

A **nutritious snack** is something from the Food Guide Pyramid food groups — fruits, vegetables, meats, beans or nuts, milk, grains — that is high in nutrients and fiber and low in fat and salt.

Keys to good nutrition:

Eat a variety of food in moderation, and

Get the right exercise.

Eating regular meals at breakfast, lunch and dinner is not always enough to provide needed calories. Children may not be able to eat enough at one meal to last them until the next meal. Nutrition survey results indicate that some U.S. children get less than enough of some nutrients in spite of the fact that most children are well-nourished.

Snacks can provide children with nutrients that regular meals may not furnish.

Snacks that provide **fiber** — fruits, vegetables and whole grain products — are good choices.

continued on page 2

Parent can help: **▶**
continued from page 1

Keep on hand nutritious cereals, bread, vegetables and fruit (canned, frozen or fresh). Children can make English muffin pizzas, "ants on a log," yogurt with fruit and crushed cereals, veggies and yogurt dip (see recipes on pages 3-4).

Sugar, salt and fat are part of many foods. Advise children to go easy on these. Eating a lot of sugar adds empty calories and may contribute to tooth decay. Foods higher in fat and sugar tend to be high in calories and low in nutrients, and should be eaten in moderation.

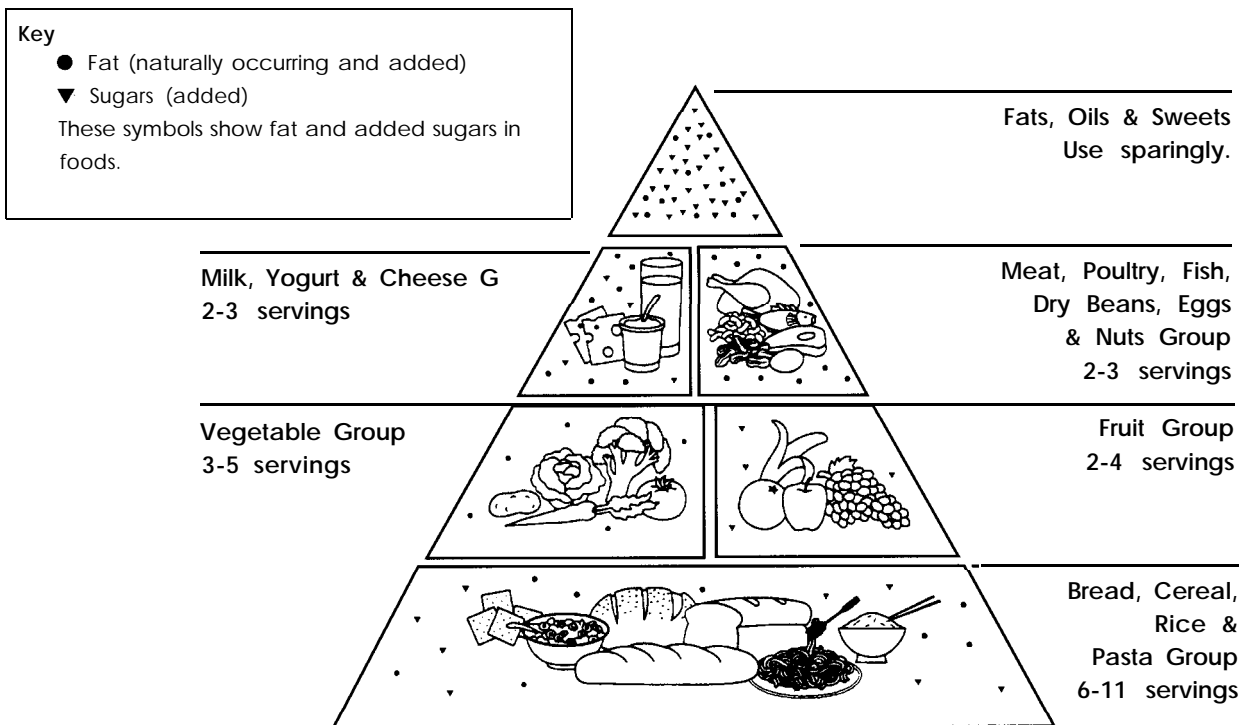
Most children like sweets, partly because they are born with this preference. One way to deal with this is to offer nutritious sweets such as fruit and fruit juices or nutritious cookies (see the no-bake recipe on page 4).

Honey is no more nutritious than sugar, and is just as likely to harm teeth. There is no particular health benefit in replacing sugar with honey. A small amount of sugar in the diet will not hurt children or cause hyperactivity.

Fitting this all together means encouraging children and adults to remember nutrition when choosing snacks.

Food Guide Pyramid: Guide to daily food choices

Use the Food Guide Pyramid to eat well every day. Start with breads, cereals, rice and pasta. Add vegetables and fruits. Include foods from the milk and meat groups. Go easy on fats, oils and sweets -the foods in the tip of the pyramid.



Source: Food Guide Pyramid HG 252 (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Agriculture), 1992 (out of print). Easy-to-read (Making Healthy Food Choices HG 250); or Spanish (*La Guía Pirámide de Alimentos* HG 250-S or *Selección de Alimentos Saludables* HG 252-S) are available from county or area extension offices, or U.S. government bookstores.



Healthy Snack Recipes and Ideas

K eep ingredients ready in the refrigerator for quick snacks. Before your child cooks alone, teach kitchen safety and prepare each recipe together.

Ambrosia Shake

- 2 ripe bananas, sliced
- ½ cup orange juice
- ¼ tsp. vanilla
- 2 cups milk

Blender or quart jar with a tight cover

If you use a jar, first mash banana slices with a fork. Measure ingredients into a blender or quart jar. Cover and blend for a few seconds, or shake the jar vigorously for a couple of minutes.

3 servings.

Fizzy Fruit Juice

- 1 small (8 ounce) can frozen fruit juice concentrate
- 1 quart club soda or sparkling mineral water

Mix the juice according to label directions, using carbonated water in place of tap water. Best served fresh.

4 servings.

Easy Pizzas

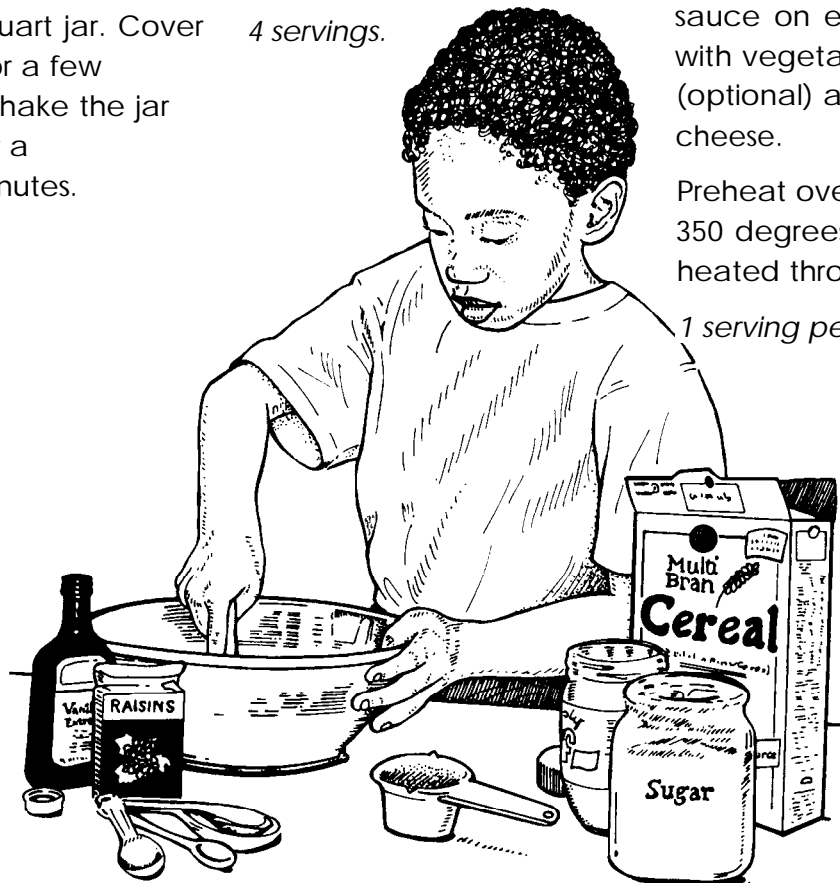
- Pita bread or English muffins
- Tomato, pizza or spaghetti sauce
- Grated cheese

Optional: Sliced onion, green pepper, zucchini, mushrooms and/or other vegetables

Place bread or muffin halves on a cookie sheet, two per person. Spread sauce on each. Cover with vegetable slices (optional) and sprinkle with cheese.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Bake until heated through.

1 serving per muffin.



more, next page



Healthy Snack Recipes and Ideas, *continued*

No-Bake Cookies

- ¼ cup peanut butter
- ¼ cup instant dry milk
- 2 tbsp. sugar or equivalent sweetener
- ½ tsp. vanilla extract
- 2 tbsp. water
- ¾ cup crushed dry cereal
- ¼ cup raisins or chopped nuts

Measure peanut butter, dry milk and sugar in a mixing bowl. Add vanilla and water, blend well. Stir in cereal and raisins or nuts. Shape into 12 balls on waxed paper. Place in a covered container and refrigerate.

12 cookies.

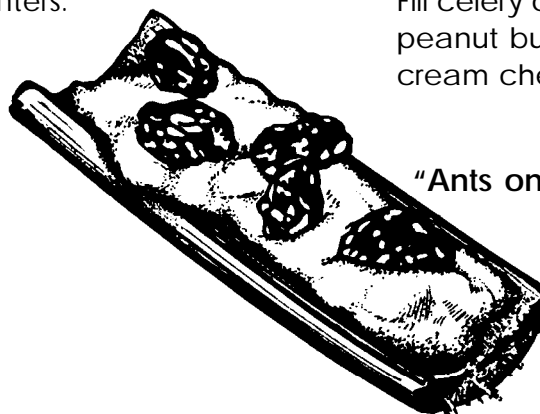
You can double or triple this recipe for more.

Fruit Snacks

- ▼ **Apples** — Slice, core and serve with peanut butter.
- ▼ **Banana split** — Split banana, top with two small scoops cottage cheese or yogurt, chopped nuts or coconut, and fruit.
- ▼ **Frozen bananas, whole or sliced** — If desired, dip in melted chocolate, then roll in chopped nuts or coconut.
- ▼ **Fruit ices** — Pour fruit juice or juice mixed with yogurt into ice cube trays, paper cups or other molds. Insert sticks before juice freezes solid.
- ▼ **Fruit kebabs** — Thread fruit pieces on toothpicks or skewers, being careful of sharp points or splinters.

Other Snacks

- ▼ **Celery sticks** — Stuff with cottage cheese, peanut butter or cheese spread.
- ▼ **Gorp** — Combine equal amounts of raisins, other dried fruits, nuts, seeds, coconut, low-fat granola or other cereal.
- ▼ **Popcorn** — Teach how to air pop or pop in the microwave safely.
Cheese popcorn — Sprinkle hot popped popcorn with grated Parmesan cheese.
- ▼ **Raw vegetables and dips** — Make lower calorie dips by using yogurt or blended cottage cheese. Cut vegetables to dipping size ahead of time.
- ▼ **"Ants on a log"** — Fill celery chunks with peanut butter or lowfat cream cheese and stick



"Ants on a log"

Nutritious Snack Inventory

Planning after-school snacks ahead of time can help your child(ren) eat the right kinds of foods and stay healthy. Together, make up a weekly snack inventory to post on the refrigerator.



Snack Inventory

● *Snack food allowed:*

● *Snacks to get help with:*

● *Foods on hand:*

● *Favorite snacks:*

Your snack inventory could include

- ▼ Snack food allowed.
- ▼ Snacks to get help preparing ahead of time.
- ▼ Food on hand from which to make snacks.
- ▼ Favorite snacks.

Resources

You may want to review *Family Keys 11: Kitchen and Food Safety*.

Ask your county or area extension office for nutrition information for children. Many extension offices carry publications, or can tell you how to order them.

12

KEY

Nutritious Snacks helps you plan nutritious

after-school snacks. Do a weekly *Snack Inventory*, post it on your refrigerator, and have ingredients ready.



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