



Snack Sense for Parents

A snack planning tool to provide fun, healthy, and budget-friendly snacks for children

About Snack Sense for Parents

Snack Sense for Parents aims to help parents incorporate the Environmental Standards for Healthy Eating into their regular snack time routine at a low price.

Hints for a Healthy Home

- ★ Serve water at every meal and snack
- ★ Do not allow sugar-sweetened beverages in your home
- ★ Serve a fruit and/or vegetable at every meal and snack
- ★ Choose foods with 0g of trans fat that do not have partially hydrogenated oils in the ingredient list
- ★ When buying grains (like bread, crackers, and cereals), choose whole grains

Snack Sense for Parents includes tips for buying healthy and inexpensive snacks, information on each of the Environmental Standards, budget-friendly sample snack menus, and a shopping guide.

Budgeting for Healthy Snacks

Although people worry that healthy foods can be expensive, there are a lot of healthy snack options that are inexpensive. When shopping, remember to select foods that are consistent with the

Environmental Standards for Healthy Eating.

- Buy fresh fruits and vegetables that are **inexpensive and available year-round**, like bananas and baby carrots. More examples are listed on page 8!
- Buy canned fruits in **100% juice or light syrup** and canned veggies **without added salt**. Stock up on canned fruits and veggies when they are on sale because they don't go bad!
- **Avoid highly processed and refined packaged foods** like cookies and animal crackers. These can be expensive, less healthy, and may contain trans fats.
- Serve **tap water** instead of sugar-sweetened beverages- tap water is a refreshing, healthy, no-calorie beverage that is virtually free!
- Buy foods that are **on sale**.
- **Buy in bulk**. If available, buy snacks from a wholesale retailer (e.g. BJ's®, Costco®, or Sam's Club®). Or, buy snacks in **large containers**; individually wrapped "single serving" sizes are expensive.
- Buy **generic or store brand foods**, which are usually less expensive than brand names.

More information on healthy homes can be downloaded at no cost from the Food and Fun website: www.foodandfun.org or www.hsph.harvard.edu/research/prc/projects/food-fun/

The Environmental Standards for Healthy Eating

Do not allow sugar-sweetened beverages in your home



Why shouldn't you serve soda, juice drinks, or sports drinks? Because they all contain **sugar!** Sugar-sweetened drinks are the top source of added sugar in kids' diets. Drinking too many high sugar drinks increases the risk for

overweight in kids. These drinks add extra calories our bodies don't notice. Soda, juice, and sports drinks can also cause **dental cavities**. Diet sodas contain **artificial sweeteners**.

They train kids to crave

"sweetness" in drinks and foods. Their long-term safety is not fully known, so it is best to avoid them. All of these sugary drinks are much more expensive than tap water which costs only pennies! If you do serve 100% juice, limit to 4 ounces per day. But, juice doesn't substitute for whole fruit. Not buying sugar-sweetened beverages is the best way to make sure your kids don't drink them!

Do not allow these drinks in your home!

- ✗ Soda
- ✗ Sweetened iced teas
- ✗ Fruit punches and fruit-ades
- ✗ Fruit drinks
- ✗ Sports drinks
- ✗ Energy drinks
- ✗ Drinks with sugar substitutes, like diet soda

Serve water at every meal and snack



Water is a great drink choice for kids. It is **calorie-free and low cost** from your nearest tap! Make sure that a pitcher of water and cups are available every day at snack time.

Kids should also drink plenty of water when

they are playing and being active. Even with a slice of fruit or splash of 100% fruit juice, this is the most **inexpensive** beverage option.

Jazz up water with these simple tricks!

- ★ Add sliced fruit like oranges to the water fruit for a light yummy flavor
- ★ Serve sodium-free seltzer water
- ★ Mix a splash of 100% juice with sodium-free seltzer water
- ★ Mix 4oz of water with 4 oz of juice for a refreshing drink

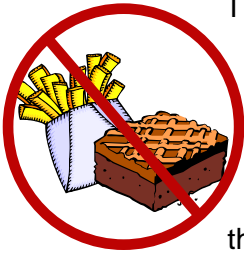


Serve a fruit and/or vegetable at every meal and snack

Fruits and vegetables are full of **vitamins, minerals, and fiber**. A diet high in fruits and vegetables can help kids grow and fight illness. The fiber and water in fruits and vegetables also help you to feel full. Serving 100% juice doesn't substitute for whole fruit! Some fruits and veggies are less-expensive in season, such as strawberries and blueberries. On the other hand, many fruits and veggies are

inexpensive year-round. Check out the **Snack Sense Shopping Guide** for some examples of inexpensive fruits and veggies!

Choose foods containing 0g of trans fat and do not have partially hydrogenated oils in the ingredient list

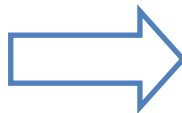


Trans fat is an unhealthy fat because it **increases the risk of certain diseases**.

Trans fat is often hidden in packaged foods like muffins, cookies, brownies, and crackers. Some brands of popcorn and peanut butter may have trans fat too. Read nutrition labels and only select foods with 0g of trans fat. By law, products containing up to 0.49 grams trans fat per serving can still be listed on the nutrition label as 0 grams trans fat. Check the ingredient list and avoid buying any foods that list “**partially hydrogenated oils**”; this means there are trans fat in the food.

Look for and avoid trans fat in these popular after school snacks...

- × Saltine and oyster crackers
- × Ritz crackers
- × Animal crackers
- × Chex Mix
- × Fig Newtons
- × Graham crackers
- × Teddy Grahams
- × Vanilla Wafers
- × Cheese nips



...at similar prices, try these healthier options instead!

- ★ Whole wheat bread
- ★ Cheerios
- ★ Whole grain goldfish crackers
- ★ Whole wheat mini bagels
- ★ Triscuit crackers
- ★ Whole wheat pita bread
- ★ Whole wheat pita chips

When serving grains (like bread, crackers, and cereals), serve whole grains



Whole grains contain **fiber, vitamins, and healthy fats** that are good for you and help you feel full longer. Many of these nutrients are not contained in refined “white” flour or sugar. Whenever possible, substitute whole grain products for refined grain foods; whole grains are often available at the **same price as refined options**. These are some frequently served snack foods that are available as whole grain for a similar price!

Instead of serving these grains...

- × White bread
- × Bagel
- × English muffin
- × Tortillas
- × Goldfish crackers
- × Saltine crackers



...serve these whole grains instead!

- ★ Whole wheat bread
- ★ Whole wheat mini bagels
- ★ Whole wheat english muffins
- ★ Corn or whole wheat tortillas
- ★ Whole grain goldfish crackers
- ★ Triscuit crackers
- ★ Whole wheat pita bread

Snack Sense Ideas

Below are some sample snacks that YMCAs are serving at after schools. These menus are great because healthy AND inexpensive. Remember! Tap water should be served at every snack for virtually no cost. What a bargain!

Snack Foods	Beverages
Apple slices, Peanut butter	Water & 1% milk
Celery, Raisins, String cheese	Water
Oranges, Triscuit crackers	Water
Whole wheat crackers, Oranges	Water
Salsa, Beans, Corn tortilla chips	Water
Banana, Oatmeal	Seltzer water
Egg salad w/mayo, Whole wheat bread, Cucumber slices	Water & 1% milk
Broccoli, Couscous	Water with splash of 100% fruit juice
Tuna salad w/mayo, Baby carrots, Wheat Thins	Water
Banana, Peanut butter, Raisins	Water
Peanut butter, Whole wheat mini bagel, Raisins	Water
Applesauce, Popcorn	Water & 1% milk
Banana, Cheerios	Water & 1% Milk
Baby carrots, Hummus	Water
Tomato wedges, String cheese	Water
Whole wheat spaghetti, Tomato sauce	Water with orange slices
Colored pepper slices, Cheese	Water & 1% milk
Whole grain Goldfish crackers, Raisins	Water
Fruit canned in 100% juice, Whole wheat pretzels	Water
Trail mix (nuts, sunflower seeds, dried fruit)	Water with splash of 100% fruit juice

Snack Sense Shopping Guide



Fruits, vegetables, proteins, and grains are the building blocks of healthy bodies. Each day at snack, offer a fruit or veggie AND a protein or grain. Serving sizes are on the Nutrition Facts Label of packaged foods. In general, 1 medium fresh fruit or ½ cup of chopped or canned fruit counts as a serving. One serving of dried fruit is ¼ cup. 1 cup of raw leafy veggies, or ½ cup of other vegetables is one serving. These are standard serving sizes, but children may eat more or less of a food based on individual needs. For more information on serving sizes, see our *Snack Sense Serving Size Guide!*

Below are some examples of budget-friendly healthy options for fruits, veggies, proteins and grains that YMCAs are serving in their after school programs!

Offer a fruit or vegetable option every day!

Fruits

- Apple slices
- Apricots
- Raisins
- Banana
- Applesauce
- Canned fruit in 100% juice
- Grapes
- Oranges
- Dried mixed fruit without added sugar
- Avocado
- Frozen berries

Vegetables

- Celery
- Salsa
- Frozen peas
- Canned corn niblets
- Cucumber
- Colored pepper slices
- Baby carrots
- Broccoli
- Lettuce
- Tomatoes

* Avoid french fries and tater-tots.

Offer a protein or grain option every day!

Whole Grains

- Whole wheat bread
- Triscuit crackers
- Couscous
- Quinoa
- Whole wheat bagels
- Whole grain Goldfish crackers
- Cheerios
- Corn tortillas
- Whole wheat tortillas
- Whole wheat English muffins

*Avoid whole grain foods with trans fats. Make sure trans fat is 0g. Do not buy anything with "partially hydrogenated" in the ingredient list.

Protein

- Canned black beans
- Hard boiled egg
- Peanut butter
- Tuna
- String cheese
- Mixed nuts
- Hummus
- Yogurt
- Cottage cheese

*Nut allergies are a serious issue. Make sure no one is allergic before serving ANY products with nuts.

Snack Sense Serving Size Guide

What counts as a serving? It depends on the type of food! Check out the general guidelines below and a few examples for each type of food. For packaged foods, check the nutrition label- it lists the serving size! Note that serving sizes are standard serving sizes for planning purchases, but children may eat more or less of a food based on individual needs.

Fruits

In general, 1 medium fresh fruit or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of chopped or canned fruit counts as a serving. One serving of dried fruit is $\frac{1}{4}$ cup.

Here are some examples of 1 fruit serving!

- 1 medium banana
- 1 medium apple
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of sliced strawberries
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup canned pineapple or peaches
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of raisins or dried cranberries
- $\frac{1}{4}$ of a medium avocado

Veggies

In general, 1 cup of raw leafy vegetables or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of other vegetables (cooked or raw) counts as 1 serving.

Here are some examples of 1 vegetable serving!

- 1 cup of baby spinach or lettuce
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of baby carrots
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of sliced cucumbers
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of cherry tomatoes
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of tomato sauce

Whole Grains

One slice of bread, about 1 cup of cereal, or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of cooked cereal, rice or pasta is one grain serving.

Here are some examples of 1 whole grain serving!

- 1 slice of whole wheat bread
- 1 whole wheat tortilla (7 inches in diameter)
- 1 cup of Cheerios
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of couscous
- $\frac{1}{2}$ whole wheat English muffin
- 6 Triscuit crackers
- 50 whole grain goldfish crackers

Protein

One cup of yogurt, $1\frac{1}{2}$ ounces of cheese, 2 tablespoons of peanut butter, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of beans, and $\frac{1}{3}$ cup of nuts is one serving.

Here are some examples of 1 protein serving!

- 1 hard boiled egg
- 1 cup of yogurt
- 1 stick of string cheese
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of shredded cheese
- 2 Tbs hummus
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of black beans
- $\frac{1}{2}$ can of tuna