

Healthy Food for Children

Giving your child healthy options is important to providing good nutrition for growth and development, supporting lifelong healthy habits, and preventing costly and potentially disabling diseases, like heart disease, cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity.

Snacks are a bigger part of kids' diets than in the past. Snacks can make positive and negative contributions to kids' diets - depending on the choices we offer. Below are ideas of healthy food options.

Fruits and Vegetables

Almost all of the snacks served to children should be fruits or vegetables. Do taste tests or let kids choose, that way they will feel apart of their food choices. Be creative in the way fruit is cut and served; this may include sliced, cut in half, cubed or wedges. Vegetables can be served with dips as well as with lemon juice.

Healthy Grains- (whole grains are low in fats and sugars.)

Serve mostly whole grains, which provide more fiber, vitamins and minerals than refined grains. Whole wheat or whole grain should be the first ingredient listed. Healthy whole grain options can include: English muffins, tortillas, pastas, breakfast cereals and crackers. Refined grains, such as white bread and goldfish, should not be everyday offerings. Be sure to read nutrition labels to pick options that are low in sugars, saturated fat and trans fat.

Low-Fat Dairy Foods

To protect children's bones and hearts, make sure all dairy foods are low in fat, such as yogurts and low-fat puddings. Please be aware that many yogurts are high in sugar and artificial flavors. Since cheese is the number two source of heart-damaging saturated fat in children's diets, choose lower-fat cheeses, several small portions, and serve cheese with other foods like, fruit, vegetables or whole grain crackers.

Healthy Beverages

Water

Water should be the primary drink served to children at all times. It satisfies thirst and replenishes the body. Water takes a very important role in healthy brain development and should be a beverage that children learn to drink young (before they become accustomed solely to flavored drinks).

Fruit Juice

Choose only 100% fruit juice, but limit juice to no more than 6 ounces (a little less than a cup) for children 1-6 years old and no more than 12 ounces (1 ½ cups) for 7-18 year olds. Avoid "juice drinks", which nutritionally, are no better than soda. The labels should list 100% juice and avoid drinks with sugar or high fructose corn syrup in the ingredient list. Please remember that natural fruit is always better than fruit juice. Another good suggestion is to dilute Juice with water (half and half).

Some Great Lunch Choices

Vegetables

Try to encourage your children to eat and try different vegetables like snap peas, cauliflower, string beans & zucchini.

Any raw vegetables (cucumbers, celery, carrots, snap peas, cherry tomatoes, & broccoli)

Salad (place dressing on the side to let child prepare at school)

Vegetable Soup

Cream of broccoli

Fruit

Try to encourage your children to eat and try different fruits like kiwi, apricots, peaches, plums.

Melon, honeydew and watermelon

Fruit Cocktail with orange juice (instead of syrup)

Fruit Skewers

Homemade Smoothies

Grains

Rice, you may add vegetables (carrots, corn and peas)

Whole-wheat Pasta (with sauce)

Whole Wheat Pita Bread

Quinoa

Beans

Lentils

Oatmeal

Baked potato

Corn on the Cob

Protein

(Please remember the observance of the Kashrut Laws - no chicken, meat, pork or shellfish; also for the safety of our children, please respect our Nut-Free policy)

Edamame Beans

Imitation Crab Sushi

Fish Sticks

Tofu and other Soy Products

Tuna Salad

Hard Boiled Egg or Egg Salad

Humus

Sunflower Seed Butter

Dairy

Low-fat String Cheese

Cream cheese on whole wheat bread or small bagel

Cheese Quesadilla

Quiche (vegetable or cheese)

Plain Yogurt (with honey or add fresh fruit)

Low-fat Cottage Cheese