

# Healthy Snacking 101

Healthy snacks fuel your children's brains and bodies between meals. Use these ideas to make snack time simpler and more nutritious for everyone in your household!

.....



## Everyday tips

Puzzled about how to come up with healthy snacks for your youngsters? Try these ideas:

- Keep a variety of fruit in the house. Go for kid favorites like bananas, apples, and oranges, but also encourage your children to sample less-familiar produce, perhaps mangoes, kiwis, papayas, or blackberries. *Tip:* Look for fruit that's in season or on sale to keep costs down.
- Raw vegetables make great snacks. Offer green beans or baby carrots with a dip of low-fat ranch dressing or guacamole.
- Together, read food labels when you're grocery shopping. Make a game of picking out nutritious snacks and drinks. *Example:* See who can find the granola bars with the least sugar or the salsa with the lowest sodium.
- Look for healthier versions of snacks your youngsters like. For instance, get baked crackers, whole-wheat pretzels, and low-fat string cheese.
- Store healthy snacks in your pantry or refrigerator at your children's eye level. Your kids will see them first and be more apt to reach for them.



## Fruit surprises

Your children will be delighted by the treat in the middle of these fruit pops.

Pour 100% juice (grape, orange, apple) into paper cups. Stand the cups upright in the freezer. Then, put a strawberry or pineapple chunk on the end of an ice cream stick.

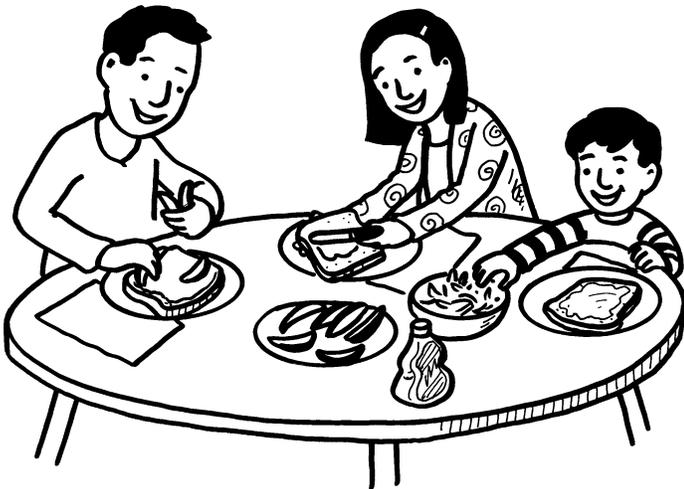
When the juice cups are partially frozen, insert the sticks, burying the fruit inside the juice. When they're completely frozen, peel off the paper cup for a surprise snack!



- Put together snacks that combine two major nutrients. Serving a protein and a carbohydrate together—a turkey and cheese sandwich, for instance—will fill your kids up and give them energy. Add a drink (water, fat-free milk) to keep them hydrated.
- Buy snacks like whole-grain cereal, nuts, and dried fruits in bulk to cut costs, and then package them in individual servings in zipper bags. *Note:* Show your children how to check the nutrition label to find the size of one serving. It's often not the whole bag or box!
- Take along healthy snacks when you go out. You'll avoid stopping for fast food or buying junk food from snack bars or vending machines when your youngsters are hungry.
- Let your children pitch in and help prepare their own snacks. Steer them toward healthier choices, and watch as they happily eat what they've made!

*continued*

## Nutrition Nuggets™



**At home**

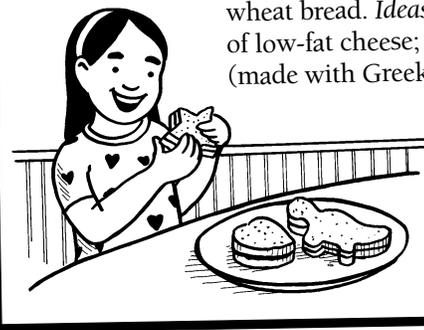
Vary snacks to keep youngsters interested, and spend time as a family coming up with new creations. These suggestions will get you started:

- Make yogurt parfaits. In a clear cup, layer low-fat plain Greek yogurt, blueberries, crushed graham crackers, and a drizzle of honey. Repeat the layers.
- Spread honey mustard on two slices of whole-wheat bread. Layer sliced apples and low-fat cheddar cheese inside. Wrap the sandwich in foil, and bake for 10 minutes at 350°.
- Use corn tortillas, pita rounds, or English muffin halves to make mini-pizzas. Top with low-sodium tomato sauce, grated skim mozzarella cheese, and vegetables (sliced mushrooms, broccoli pieces). Sprinkle on oregano. Broil 3–5 minutes, until the cheese bubbles.

**Cookie-cutter sandwiches**

Snack-size sandwiches are more fun to eat when they're shaped like dinosaurs, stars, or hearts.

Make your youngsters' favorite sandwiches with whole-wheat bread. *Ideas:* lean ham and a slice of low-fat cheese; tuna or chicken salad (made with Greek yogurt); grape jelly (reduced sugar). Then, use cookie cutters to make them into shapes (the extra pieces make good finger foods, too).



- Slice a cucumber in half horizontally, and hollow out the insides. Fill the cucumber cups with a “light” egg salad (mash 2 hard-boiled eggs with 1 tsp. reduced-fat mayonnaise).
- For an easy dip, drain and rinse a 14-oz. can of beans (kidney, cannellini), and put them in a blender or food processor with 1 tbsp. apple cider vinegar, ½ tsp. chili powder, and a pinch of cumin. Blend until smooth. Serve with baked tortilla chips.

**On the go**

Keep these healthy snacks on hand for your children to take wherever they go:

- Let them design their own trail mix. Set out bowls of cereal, different kinds of unsalted nuts, golden raisins, and sunflower seeds. They can measure, mix, and match ingredients in zipper bags, then label their bags with names they invent (“Bradley’s Blend,” “Energy to Go”).



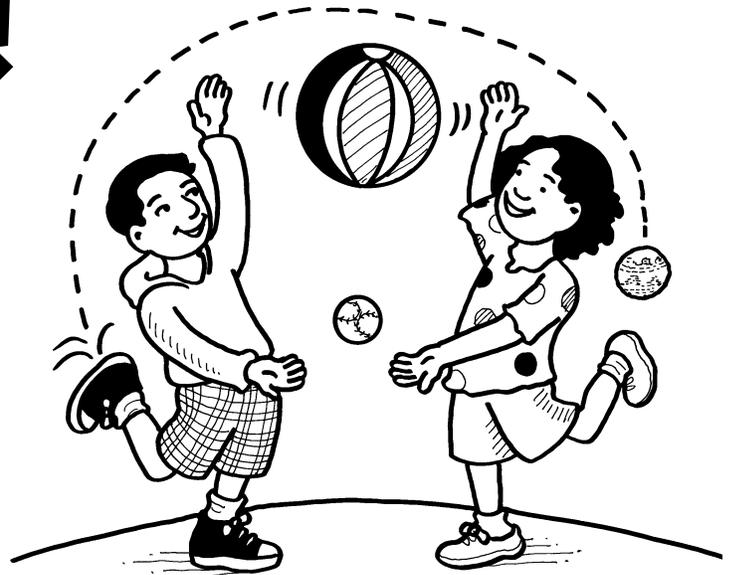
- Buy individual cups of applesauce, fat-free pudding, or fruit packed in its own juice (mandarin oranges, peaches, fruit cocktail). Or package single servings in small, reusable plastic containers.
- Bake your own pita chips. Slice whole-grain pita bread into chip-size triangles. Put the pieces on a baking sheet, and brush lightly with olive oil. Bake at 350° until crisp, about 10 minutes.
- Fresh fruit is portable and always healthy. Your youngsters can take a piece of whole fruit (peach, plum, pear) on the way out the door. Or freeze a bunch of grapes for a frosty fruit treat.

*Editor’s Note:* Nutrition Nuggets™ is reviewed by a registered dietitian. Consult a physician before beginning any major change in diet or exercise.

**Nutrition Nuggets™**

# Have a Ball!

Your youngsters will have hours of fun with these ball games—as they build their muscles, coordination, stamina, and overall fitness. Pick a game, grab a ball, and play!



## The big bounce (two or more players)

**You'll need:** a playground ball

This silly contest lets players test each other's coordination. One player starts by naming a bouncing challenge. *Examples:* "Bounce the ball and spin in a circle before catching it." "Stand on one foot and dribble the ball 10 times with your left hand (or right hand, if you're left-handed)." Players take turns trying the challenge. Everyone who's successful scores a point. Then, the next player issues his challenge. Play to 20 points.

## Hot potato volley (four or more players)

**You'll need:** a volleyball, music

The goal of this fast-paced game is to avoid being the last



person to touch the ball when the music stops. Before you begin, have one person stand with her back to the other players and turn on the music. While the music plays, everyone keeps the ball moving

by quickly bumping it—volleyball style—to any other player. The person in charge of the music turns it off at random. When the music stops, everyone gets a point—except the last player to touch the ball. Then, that person takes over the job of playing the music. Whoever reaches 10 points first wins the game.

## Baseball tag (three players)

**You'll need:** a baseball or softball, two baseball gloves, two rugs or other items to use as bases

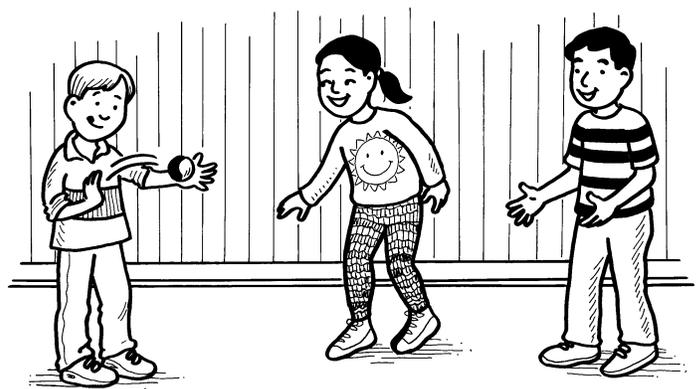
In this old favorite, one player must dash from base to base without getting tagged by a player with the ball. Set the bases about 15 feet apart. Two players are fielders, and one is the

runner. The fielders each guard a different base. The runner chooses a base to stand on. Play starts when the fielders begin tossing the ball back and forth to each other. At any time while the ball is in motion, the runner can try to dash to the other base. If she makes it there before the fielder catches the ball and tags her with it, she's safe and gets to run again. If the fielder tags her with the ball before she reaches the base, the two trade roles.

## Hacky Sack pass (two or more players)

**You'll need:** a Hacky Sack or a small beanbag

In this game, players bat the ball back and forth using their hands, but there's a "catch." Each player must bat the Hacky Sack once with the palm of his right hand, then once with the palm of his left hand before batting it to the next player (a total of three hits). If a player drops the Hacky Sack or fails to bat it with each hand, he gets a point. But in this game, you don't want to score points! The low score at the end of 5 rounds wins.



*continued*



## Golf ball and spoon race

(two or more players)

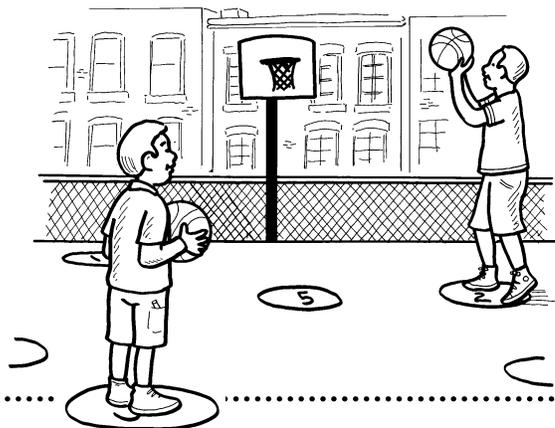
**You'll need:** golf balls, large spoons

Try this game indoors or out. First, choose the course. It can be a straight or zigzag line, or you might design an obstacle course. Each player stands at the starting line and places a golf ball on a spoon. At a starting signal, players carry the balls on spoons through the course. You can't touch the ball with your other hand or use it to hold the ball in place. If a player drops the ball, she must return to the starting point, put it back on the spoon, and begin again. The winner is the first player to cross the finish line. *Variation:* Try this as a relay race between two teams with an equal number of players.

## Shot spots (two or more players)

**You'll need:** a basketball, sidewalk chalk, a basketball hoop

Any season is basketball season with this game of skill. Before starting, players take turns numbering "shot spots" on the court with sidewalk chalk. The first player chooses a spot and marks it "1." The next player picks a spot and marks it "2," and so on, until 10 spots have been marked. Players take turns shooting the ball, starting at "1." When a player makes a basket, he advances to the next spot for another turn. If he misses, he tries again from the same spot on his next turn. The first player to advance around the court making a basket from every spot wins. *Variation:* For indoor play, use a trash can and a wadded-up newspaper "ball." Mark spots with bits of masking tape.



## Beach towel toss

(four players divided into two teams)

**You'll need:** two beach towels, a beach ball

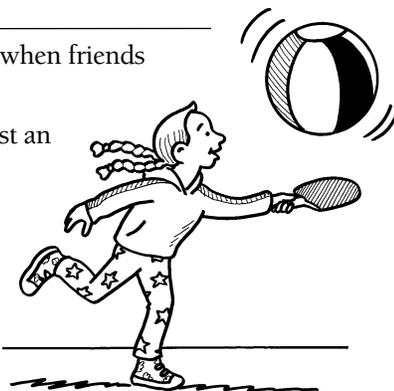
Not at the beach? No problem! Here's a beach game for your backyard or a park. Each pair of players holds a beach towel between them like a hammock, standing close enough

to each other so the towel sags a bit in the middle. One team places the beach ball in the center of their towel and launches it into the air by pulling the ends of the towel away from each other. The other team runs to catch the ball with their towel and launch it back to the other team the same way. When one team drops the ball, the other team scores a point. Eleven points wins the game.

## Ball games for one

Your child can enjoy active time even when friends or siblings aren't around. Try these ideas:

- Play solo tennis. Hit a tennis ball against an outdoor wall with a tennis racket.
- Juggle sponge balls (the ones used as pool toys work well). Or bat a sponge ball across the yard with a pool noodle.
- Bounce a Ping-Pong ball into a row of plastic cups. Can you get the ball in each cup once?



- In an open field or a big yard, kick a soccer ball as far as you can, run to where it lands, and dribble it back. Try to kick it farther each time.
- Make your own carnival game by stacking empty cans in a pyramid on the ground and throwing a softball to knock them down. *Variation:* Turn it into a bowling game, and roll the ball to knock the cans down.
- Keep a beach ball in the air by hitting it with a Ping-Pong paddle.

*Editor's Note:* Nutrition Nuggets™ is reviewed by a registered dietitian. Consult a physician before beginning any major change in diet or exercise.

# Nutrition Nuggets™