

Audio transcript for Head Start Healthy Snacks for Preschool Children

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Welcome to Head Start's Healthy Snacks for Preschool Children.

About this Course

One way to ensure preschool children meet all of their nutrient needs is to provide them with healthy snacks during the day. This course provides you with information on nutritious snacking to get you started! You will learn why it is important for preschool children to have healthy snacks during the day, what important food groups to include when planning snacks, and how to create nutritious snacks your children will enjoy.

Why is snacking important?

In order to meet their nutrient needs, it is important preschool children have well planned, nutritious snacks during the day in addition to their meals. Children cannot eat as much at meal times as adults can and we should not expect them to. Healthy snacks can be used to help fill in any gaps in their nutrient requirements not provided by meals. You can learn more about the nutrition needs of children at Kid's Eat Right.

What is a snack?

When you hear the word "snack" what comes to mind? Unfortunately, the word "snack" is often associated with less healthy food choices, such as chips, cookies, candy, and soda. Snacking on items such as these do not provide your child with the nutrients they need.

Got to change our thinking!

We need to change our thinking and view snacks as an opportunity for children to eat healthy foods that support their growth and development. The key is finding healthy snacks your child will enjoy!

Whole Grains

Benefits of Whole Grains

A key recommendation of the 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans is that at least half of the grains we consume should be whole grains.

Whole grains are an excellent source of fiber as well as many vitamins and minerals important for health. Read more at [2015-20 Dietary Guidelines for Americans](#).

"Whole" versus "Refined" Grains

When discussing grains it is important to understand the difference between whole grains and refined grains. Whole grains contain all three key parts of the grain – the bran, the germ, and the endosperm, as well as minerals, vitamins, and fiber. Brown rice is a whole grain, unlike white rice which is a refined grain.

Refined Grains

When whole grains are processed into refined grains the bran and the germ are removed. The processing increases the shelf-life of the grain, unfortunately it also removes iron, B vitamins, and fiber. Enriched grains have iron and B vitamins added back during processing to improve their nutrient content. Products made with refined grains include: white flour, white pasta, flour tortillas, baguette, and white bread.

Reading Food Labels

To determine if an item is whole grain it is important to read the food label. The “whole” grain should be the first grain ingredient on the list. Make sure to look for the word “whole,” which indicates you truly have a whole grain item. Let’s practice by clicking on the products.

The label shows that this bread is made from whole grain wheat flour.

The label shows that these tortillas are made from whole wheat flour.

The label shows that these bagels are made with whole grain 100% whole wheat flour.

The label shows that this spaghetti is made with 100% whole grain.

The label for the multi-grain crackers shows that these are made using wheat flour and whole wheat flour. The term “multi-grain” means that a product has been made with multiple grain ingredients. Not all “multi-grain” items are whole grain. Read the ingredient label to determine if the grains included in the item are whole grain. These crackers include both enriched grains and whole grains.

The cereal label shows that this product is made with whole grain oats.

Vitamins and Minerals

As mentioned, whole grains provide numerous vitamins and minerals. Let’s find out how nutritious and necessary whole grains are by clicking on the vitamins and minerals buttons.

Vitamins in whole grains include: A, B6, B1 Thiamin, B2 Riboflavin, B3 Niacin.

Minerals contained in whole grains include: Manganese, Phosphorus, Selenium, Copper, Iron, and Magnesium.

What is fiber?

Dietary fiber comes from plant foods that we consume, including whole grains, fruits, vegetables, beans, and peas. Our bodies cannot digest or absorb fiber, but fiber helps our bodies move food through our bodies, promotes proper bowel function, and reduces constipation. In addition, fiber may help reduce the risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and obesity. Fiber found in plants helps move food through our digestive system.

How much fiber is enough?

How much fiber should children consume daily? The Food and Nutrition Board of the Institute of Medicine has made the following recommendations for the adequate amount of fiber that children should consume daily. Check out the amount of fiber these whole grains, vegetables, and fruits contain.

Children ages 1 – 3 should consume at least 19 grams of fiber daily.

Children ages 4 – 8 should consume 25 grams of fiber daily.

Compare the amount of fiber contained in these products.

One medium-sized apple contains 4 grams of fiber

A half cup of applesauce contains 1.5 grams of fiber

One medium-sized Banana has 3 grams of fiber

One cup of Raspberries has 9 grams of fiber

A half cup of Raisins contains 2.6 grams

One cup cooked Broccoli has 5 grams and one cup of cooked Spinach contains 4 grams of fiber

One slice of Whole Wheat Bread has 2 grams of fiber and a slice of White Bread contains approximately 1 gram

One cup of cooked Brown Rice has 4 grams of fiber compared to one cup cooked white rice that contains more or less 1 gram of fiber

One cup of Cheerios has 3 grams

One cup of Oatmeal contains 4 grams of fiber

A medium Sweet Potato or russet potato with skin contains 4 grams of fiber

A cup of cooked Black Beans contains 15 grams of fiber and a cup of cooked kidney beans 16 grams

One ounce of almonds contains 4 grams and a half cup of Pumpkin Seeds contains 3 grams of fiber

Whole Grain Stamp

When trying to determine if a product is whole grain, you can look for the Whole Grain Stamp. When a product has this stamp you will know that the item provides at least half a serving of whole grains. This is a voluntary labeling stamp, thus not all items that are whole grain will contain this stamp. Companies submit their product to be approved as "whole grain." When approved, they are eligible to use the stamp on their product.

Fruits and vegetables

A goal you can set for your family is to make half of your plate fruits and vegetables as illustrated in the Choose My Plate image. Read more at ChooseMyPlate.gov.

Source of Many Nutrients

Eating a variety of fruits and vegetables is important, as each type of fruit and vegetable contains different nutrients your child's body needs to grow. Can you guess what vitamin these fruit and vegetable groups provide by dragging them to their appropriate baskets? Oranges, strawberries, and broccoli are a great source of Vitamin C. Vitamin A is contained in carrots, red bell pepper, and cantaloupe. Spinach, beans, and peas are great sources of iron.

Seasonal Produce

Fruits and vegetables can be purchased fresh, canned, or frozen. When buying fresh produce, try buying produce that is in season. You will get more flavor and save money by doing so. Click on the seasons to check the produce growing during that time of year.

Canned Fruits and Vegetables

When buying canned fruit, look for fruit that is packed in water or in natural juices. Be aware that fruits canned in syrup have added sugars.

Frozen Fruits and Vegetables

Frozen fruits and vegetables can be a healthy alternative, especially for fruits and vegetables that are currently not in season. Keeping a bag of frozen fruit in the freezer is a great idea, as it can be used to make smoothies, added to yogurt or breakfast cereal, or mixed into muffins or pancake batters. Check out the fruit smoothie recipe by selecting the link provided.

Dairy Products

Assess your knowledge!

With so many types of milk available at the store, how do you know which is the most appropriate for your preschool child. Take a guess at the following question by clicking on the cows! What type of milk should my preschool child consume?

Correct! It is recommended that children age 2 and older consume 1% or fat free milk. These types of milk contain the same amount of calcium, Vitamin D, and protein as whole milk and 2% milk with less fat.

Different Types of Milk

Find out how the different milks compare against each other. Click on the nutrition labels to see the nutrients and fat content each provides.

Whole milk nutrition label shows it contains Vitamin A 6%, Vitamin C 4%, Calcium 30%, Iron 0%, Vitamin D 25%, total fat 12%, saturated fat 25%, Potassium 11%.

Fat-free milk nutrition label shows it contains Vitamin A 10%, Vitamin C 4%, Calcium 30%, Iron 0%, Vitamin D 25%, total fat 0%, saturated fat 0%, Potassium 12%.

2% milk nutrition label shows it contains Vitamin A 10%, Vitamin C 4%, Calcium 30%, Iron 0%, Vitamin D 25%, total fat 8%, saturated fat 15%, Potassium 11%.

One percent milk nutrition label shows it contains Vitamin A 10%, Vitamin C 4%, Calcium 30%, Iron 0%, Vitamin D 25%, total fat 4%, saturated fat 8%, Potassium 12%.

Low-fat Dairy

Low-fat dairy items make great snacks for preschool children and are excellent sources of calcium and Vitamin D—two essential nutrients that support bone growth. Click on the button for low-fat snack ideas that your child will love!

Low-Fat Dairy Snack Ideas include 1% or fat-free milk, low-fat yogurt or squeezable yogurt sticks, string cheese and cheese slices, fruit smoothie, and cottage cheese. Try mixing it in fruit for a tasty treat!

Healthy Drinks

Water, water, water!

Make water the “Go To” choice for your child. Water is the top choice for children to drink with snacks. Encourage your child to drink water by getting him/her a water bottle to carry around.

Infused water

Consider trying infused waters for a beverage with added natural flavorings. Infused waters are made by mixing a variety of fresh vegetables, fruits, and herbs for unique flavor combinations, such as cucumber mint, blueberry lavender, and cherry lime. You may want to try the recipe for infused waters that is suggested.

Try other drinks!

Other than water, provide your child with these drinks.

Two cups daily of 1% low fat or fat free milk for children ages 2-3, and 2.5 cups daily for children 4-5. 4 to 6 ounces daily of 100% fruit juice for children ages 1 to 6. When buying juice make sure the label says 100% juice so that you are truly get fruit juice and not just a fruit-flavored drink. Click on the Healthy Tips button to read more.

Helpful Tip: Is your child drinking too much juice? If so, consider diluting the juice to 50% water and 50% fruit juice. You can also mix $\frac{1}{4}$ cup juice with sparkling water for a fruity drink that is lower in sugar! Try to avoid serving soda and other sugary drinks with snacks, as these drinks do not provide children with the nutrients they need to grow. In addition, the added sugar is hard on the teeth and can lead to dental concerns down the road.

Preparing Healthy Snacks

Tips for Planning Healthy Snacks

One way to instill good snack habits is to involve your child in the planning, shopping, and preparation of snacks. Click on the color icons for tips to keeping your child engaged and eating healthy.

Grocery shopping.

At the store, allow your child to select fruits, vegetables, different types of whole grain snacks, and healthy breakfast cereals.

Make healthy choices an easy alternative.

Keep a fruit bowl on the counter so your child can get a banana or orange on the way out to play. Have low-fat yogurt and string cheese available in the refrigerator for a quick snack on the go. Have a section designated in your pantry for healthy snacks that your children know they can select from.

Ask your child to help. Give your child small tasks to help with preparing snacks, such as: Mixing fruit in a bowl for fruit salad or stirring fruit into yogurt for a parfait.

Using a cookie cutter to cut sandwiches into unique shapes. Serving the snack onto a plate.

Provide small portions. After purchasing healthy breakfast cereals and whole grain snack items, individually portion servings into small plastic reclosable bags that your child can grab at snack time.

Try out these recipes!

Here are a few easy to make recipes to get your child eating fun and healthy snacks. You may want to download and print the recipes provided.

Try out these recipes!

Create healthy snacks using whole wheat tortillas! Access some easy to make recipes on this page.

Let's Plan!

Let's plan out a weekly snack menu! Planning saves you money and ensures snacks are well balanced and contain the nutrients your child needs to grow. Instructions: Print the Healthy Snack Planning Guide. From the drop-down menus on the next page, pick two items, each from different food groups, and write them on your planning guide. Fill your planning guide from Monday through Friday. You now have a list of healthy snacks for your child to enjoy!

Warning about Choking

Young children, especially those under the age of 4, are at an increased risk of choking. To reduce the risk of choking: watch children closely while eating, encourage them to eat slowly and fully chew their food, limit distractions while eating (turn off the TV), and chop food into small pieces. Watch out for these foods! Foods that are round or circular in shape, such as grapes, hotdog slices, and cherry tomatoes. Foods that are hard, such as nuts, seeds, chips, pretzels, hard candy, carrots, raw vegetables, dried fruit (raisins), apple slices, tough pieces of meat, and large pieces of fruit with skin. Foods that are easily swallowed like hot dogs. Small food items, such as popcorn, whole kernel corn, whole beans, peas and nuts. Sticky foods like marshmallows, peanut butter, taffy, and sticky candy.

Conclusion

Congratulations! You have successfully completed this course. In this course you learned that providing preschool children healthy snacks during the day can help ensure they meet all of their nutrient needs. You also learned what important food groups to include when planning snacks and easy ideas for snacks that children will enjoy. We hope the information learned in this course will be helpful when planning healthy snacks for your children and family.



Important! To print your Certificate of Completion, please certify that you have finished the course, then click Submit.

Name

Type your name in the box below and click the Next button.