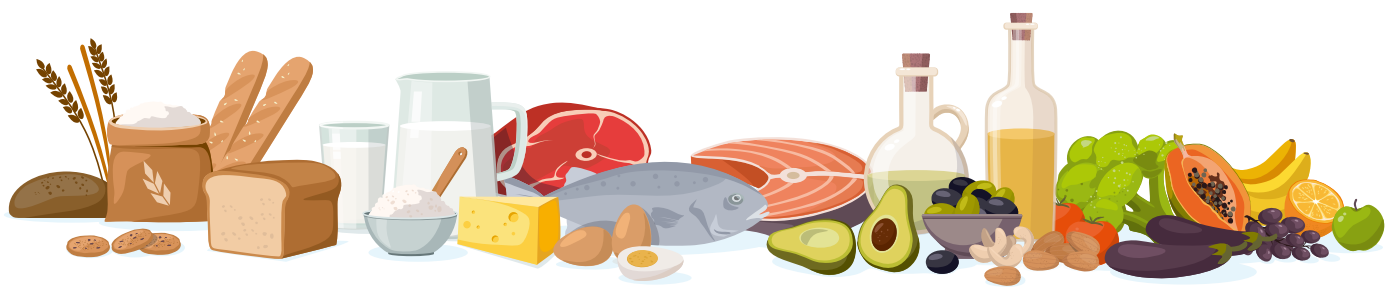


# HEALTHY TODDLER SNACKS



Children grow so fast that they often need more energy and nutrients than one meal can provide. Thoughtful snacks help keep their energy steady between meals. When snacks are offered at consistent times, children are less likely to graze throughout the day or skip meals.

## Let's break down what makes a good snack



### Carbohydrates

Gives kids energy to keep them active and playful.

### Protein

Helps build strong muscles and healthy tissue.

### Fat

Supports brain growth and helps with vitamin absorption.

### Vitamins and Minerals

Keeps little bodies and brains developing well. Eating a good variety of foods will help kids get a good variety of vitamins and minerals.

**When preparing snacks, try combining protein or healthy fat with a fiber-rich carbohydrate.** Carbohydrates give kids “quick energy”, while proteins and fats help that energy “last longer” and keep them feeling full between meals.

Use the table below to pair foods from the ‘Protein & Healthy Fats’ column with foods from the ‘Fiber-Rich Carbohydrates’ column to create a well-balanced snack.

### Protein & Healthy Fats - “Long Lasting Energy”

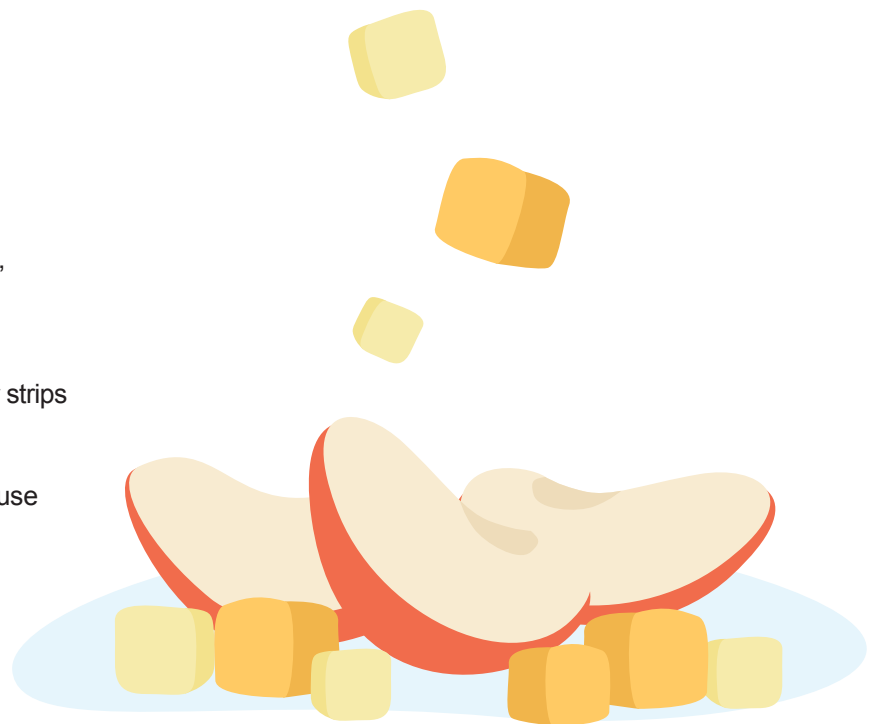
- Plain full fat yogurt or kefir
- Cheese stick (pulling them into 4-5 thin vertical strips, cutting them lengthwise - never into round “coins”)
- Cheese (shredded, cubed, sliced)
- Milk or milk alternative
- Full fat cottage cheese
- Eggs (hard boiled or scrambled)
- Avocado
- Hummus
- Deli meats (low sodium roasted turkey or chicken breast)

### Fiber-Rich Carbohydrates - “Quick Energy”

- Fruit (sliced apples/applesauce, banana, oranges, quartered grapes, berries, no sugar added fruit pouches or diced fruits in 100% juice)
- Soft or steamed veggies (carrots, bell peppers, sweet potatoes, green beans, or peas)
- Fiber rich, low sugar cereal (i.e. Cheerios)
- No sugar added oatmeal (old fashioned oats or plain instant oatmeal)
- Whole grain crackers, toast or tortilla
- Oat bars
- Puffed corn

### Sample Snack Ideas

- Apple slices with a cheese stick
- Plain full-fat yogurt mixed with softened fruits
- Fiber rich, low sugar cereal and milk
- Oatmeal mixed with applesauce (or other fruits)
- Cottage cheese and soft fruit chunks (pineapple, pear, peaches, mango)
- Scrambled egg with avocado
- Hummus and soft steamed carrots or bell pepper strips
- Deli turkey and cheese roll-ups
- Homemade fruit and yogurt smoothie (can also use Kefir instead of yogurt)
- Whole grain crackers and cheese
- Quesadilla – tortilla with melted cheese
- Whole grain toast with nut butter and mashed banana



**A stocked diaper bag gives you flexibility, saves money, and makes outings smoother for everyone.** Keeping diaper-bag-friendly, healthy snacks on hand helps maintain energy, supports steady blood sugar, and keeps routines on track while you are out and about. Having planned options also means you are less likely to rely on last-minute convenience foods that are often higher in sugar and lower in nutrients.

### Below are a few examples of diaper bag friendly snack ideas

- Unsweetened apple sauce pouches
- Whole grain crackers
- Granola bars
- Whole grain rice cakes
- Freeze dried fruit
- Shelf stable yogurt pouches
- Puffs, freeze dried snack melts, or dry cereal (in portioned bags)



### What to Look for in Store Bought Snacks

#### Sugar

Aim for 5 grams of “added sugars” or less

#### Fiber

Look for at least 3 grams to help stay full

#### Protein

Try to have 3-5 grams per serving to help stay full

#### Fat

Avoid trans fats/partially hydrogenated oils (ex: partially hydrogenated soybean, cottonseed, canola or palm oil)

#### Ingredients

- Aim for five ingredient or less
- Look for ingredients that are recognizable
- Avoid “hydrogenated oils”, “MSG”, “high-fructose corn syrup”, and artificial colors and flavors

### What to Look for in a Granola Bar

#### Sugar

- Keep “added sugars” to under 5 grams
- Avoid syrups and sugars that end in “-ose”

#### Fiber

- Aim for 3-5 grams or more per serving
- Look out for “added fiber” such as chicory root which can cause an upset stomach

#### Protein

Try to have 4-5 grams of protein to help stay full

#### Ingredients

- Look for first ingredients that include: whole grains (ex: oats or quinoa), nuts (ex: almonds, cashews), seeds (ex: chia or hemp), or dried fruit
- Look for more natural sweetener options such as dates, honey, or maple syrup, which are better options than corn syrup or cane sugar.
- Avoid hydrogenated oils/trans fats, candy pieces or highly processed isolates (ex: soy protein isolate)

# Easy Snack Preparation

## Produce Preparation

Washing and cutting fruits and vegetables in advance makes them more convenient.

- **Vegetables:** Pre-cut carrot sticks, cucumber slices, bell pepper strips, and snap peas and store in an airtight container to maintain freshness.
- **Fruit:** Pre-wash berries and grapes. For items like apples and pears, add a little lemon juice to pre-cut slices to prevent browning.
- **Frozen Options:** Freeze whole blueberries and grapes for a quick treat. You can also freeze left over smoothies in popsicle molds for a healthier ice pop option.

## Protein and Dairy Options

Pairing produce with a good protein source keeps kids fuller longer.

- **Eggs and Cheese:** Hard boiled eggs and string cheese or cheese cubes are simple high protein options with minimal preparation.
- **Yogurt:** Portion no sugar added yogurt into individual containers or jars (left over baby food jars are a great option). For fun, layer with fruit to create a “fruit on the bottom” treat.
- **Dips:** Prepare dips like hummus, ranch, or peanut butter in individual containers for quick dipping of fruits and vegetables.

## Pantry and Homemade Options

These items can be made ahead of time and stored in individual portion Ziploc bags.

- **Baked Goods:** Bake a batch of healthy muffins (ex: chocolate pumpkin or banana oat). These can be stored for up to a week.
- **Roll-Ups and Kabobs:** Make meat and cheese roll-ups using low-sodium deli meat and sliced cheese or create sweet or savory kabobs using cut up fruits, veggies, or meat and cheese.

## Organization Tips

Create a specific shelf or a “snack box” in the refrigerator where all prepared items are stored. It’s easy for kids to see and grab healthy snack options.

# FINAL

# TIPS

- Sit with your child during snack times to be a healthy role model and to prevent choking.
- Do not give chunks of raw vegetables, popcorn, whole grapes, or nuts to children under the age of 4.

***Many of the foods listed in this handout can be bought using your WIC benefits, making them easy and affordable options for your family.***