



Ten Ways to Encourage Your Child to Choose Healthy Snacks

By Connie Evers, MS, RD

- 1. Plan a snack adventure** - Involve your child in snack planning, shopping for ingredients and simple food preparation activities. Partner with your child to devise a healthy snack list that includes foods from all five food groups. Keep the list posted on the refrigerator as a reminder.
- 2. Keep snacks at eye level** - When your child walks into the kitchen, what catches her eye? Make sure to have a bowl of Cuties and other appetizing fruit on the kitchen counter.
- 3. Pack their bags** - Make sure your child has plenty of healthy grab-n-go snacks in his/her backpack. Sweet and juicy Cuties are a favorite with kids.
- 4. Make faces** - Encourage your child to “make faces” with his food by arranging Cuties sections, cut-up fruit and vegetable strips on open faced peanut butter sandwiches, whole grain waffles, burritos or mini-pizzas.
- 5. Eat a rainbow** - Challenge your child to “eat a rainbow” of fruits and vegetables. When shopping with your child, make it a game to find produce that is red, green, blue/purple, orange, brown and white. When you get home, use the foods you purchased to prepare a colorful snack together.
- 6. Homework Helper** - In the late afternoon (when kids are super hungry), set out fruit and veggies nearby the children as they work on their homework. Include foods such as easy-to-peel Cuties, mini-sandwiches, and string cheese.
- 7. Cure those pre-dinner hungries** - You *can* feed the 5:00 PM pre-dinner hungries with fresh, crunchy fruits and vegetables. Loaded with nutrition yet low in calories, fruits and veggies are an appetizer that won't spoil a child's appetite for dinner.
- 8. Dip right in** - Surveys show that kids will eat more fruits and veggies if they are presented alongside a dip. Flavored yogurt is a natural dip for fresh fruit sections and chunks.
- 9. Auto-snacking** - Hungry kids and traffic jams don't mix! Make sure to keep Cuties, water bottles, and trail mix stashed in your car for those times you can't get home right away. It will also decrease the temptation of pulling into the nearest fast food drive-through.
- 10. Food as Fuel** - For an active child, emphasize that food is the fuel for sports, dance, active play or any kind of movement. Hungry muscles need healthy fuel to work at their best. Remind them that top athletes in all sports rely on healthy snacks for peak performance.