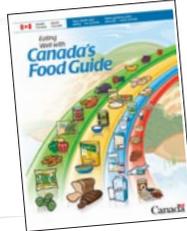




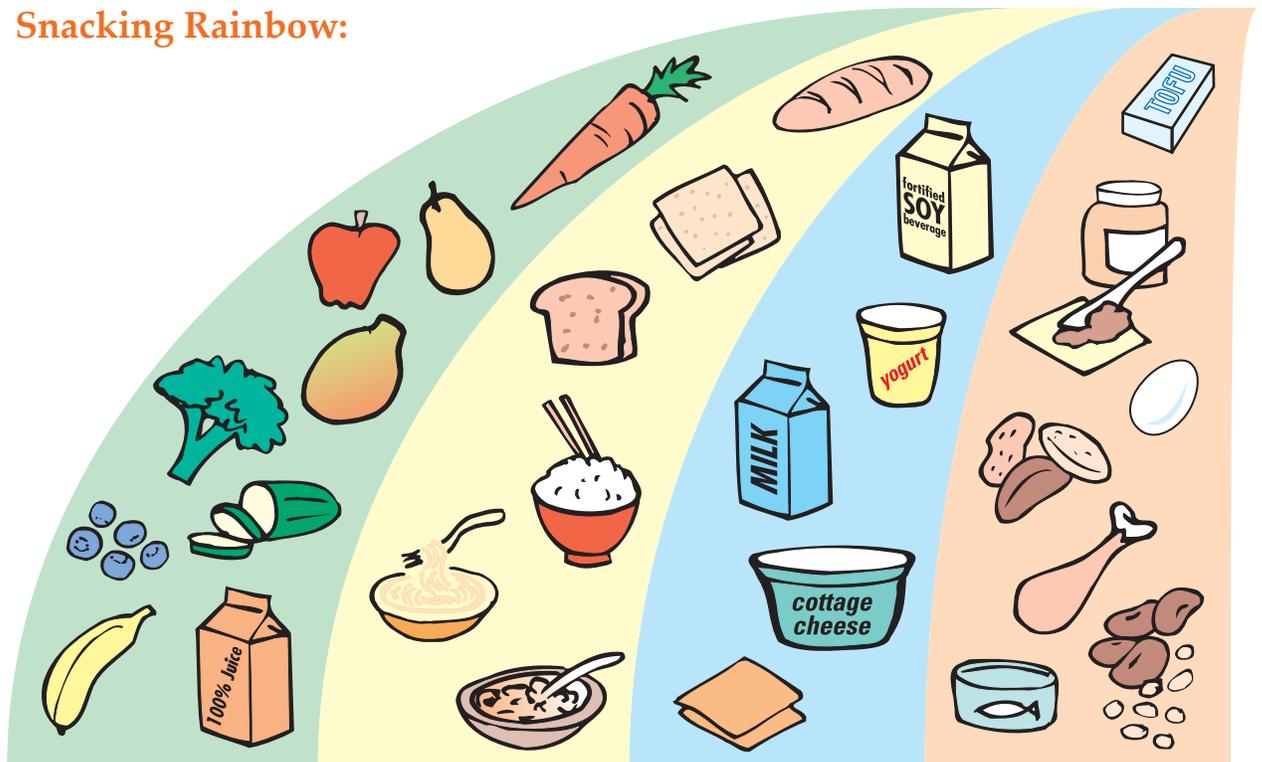
Healthy Snacks for Preschoolers (3 to 5 years)

Healthy snacks are an important part of what young children need to eat every day. This gives them lots of energy to grow, play and learn. Think of snacks as “mini-meals”.



Plan your child’s snacks using at least 2 of the 4 food groups from Canada’s Food Guide. Children need to eat 3 meals and 2-3 snacks each day to be happy and healthy.

Snacking Rainbow:



Vegetables & Fruits

Vegetables* such as carrot sticks, cucumber, broccoli, cauliflower, fresh or frozen and thawed fruit such as pear, blueberries, apple, kiwi, mango and banana, canned fruit (without sugar added)

Grain Products

Whole wheat bread or buns, roti, tortillas, cooked pasta and noodles, rice, bannock, barley, quinoa, whole grain cereal, whole grain crackers

Milk & Alternatives

Milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, cheese (cut into cubes, grated or melted), fortified soy beverage

Meat & Alternatives

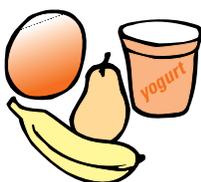
Cooked meat, chicken or fish, cooked egg, baked beans, lentils or chickpeas, split peas, cooked tofu cubes, hummus or bean dip, smooth peanut or other nut/seed butter*, nuts* and seeds*

*Read the information about choking on page 4.

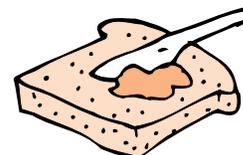
Change snacks often to make sure children get all the nutrients they need to grow.

Snack ideas

- Celery and red pepper sticks with bean dip or hummus
- Cheese cubes with apple slices
- Nut butter on toast (eg. peanut, almond, sunflower seed butter)
- Canned salmon rolled into flour tortillas
- Yogurt and sliced banana
- Hard boiled egg and orange slices
- Whole grain crackers and cheese
- Steamed meat bun
- Cooked tofu and snow peas



- Baked beans and whole wheat toast
- Fruit and yogurt smoothie
- Roti and dal
- Pineapple, canned in water, and a small muffin
- Mini pizzas on whole wheat English muffins
- Leftover chicken, rice and vegetables
- Steamed broccoli with yogurt dip
- Baked potato with cheese and salsa
- Quesadilla: beans and cheese melted into a flour tortilla
- Whole grain cereal* with milk and berries



*Cereals

- Choose whole grain cereals with less than 8 grams or 2 teaspoons of sugar per serving. Avoid cereals with artificial colours.

Drinks

- Use a cup instead of a bottle.
- Water – Give your child water to drink when he is thirsty in-between meals.
- Milk – Young children need only 500 mL (2 cups) of milk each day.



- Juice – Children don't need juice. If you decide to give juice, choose 100% juice and offer it in a cup as part of a meal or snack. Give no more than 125 ml (1/2 cup) per day.



- Unpasteurized milk and juice may contain bacteria that can make children and adults very sick. Offer only pasteurized milk and juice.

- Pop, fruit "drinks" and sport drinks are not healthy choices.



Common Concerns

Will snacks spoil my child's appetite for meals?

- Children have small stomachs and need to eat more often than adults. They may eat small amounts at family meal times.
- Snacks give you the chance to offer other healthy foods they may not eat at a meal, such as vegetables and dip.



My child snacks all day as he is playing. Is this okay?

- No. Constant eating and drinking may cause tooth decay and may mean children aren't hungry at meals. Offer small snacks at set times between meals.



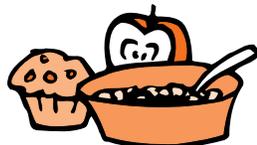
My child is so cranky at dinner time, she eats very little.

- Children are often so tired and hungry at dinner time they will not sit and eat well. Plan family meals earlier or offer a small, healthy snack 2-3 hours before dinner. It's fine if she eats a smaller meal at dinner time.



My child sometimes gets constipated*, what should I feed him to prevent this?

- Offer lots of whole grains (such as whole wheat bread, oatmeal, and bran cereals) and vegetables and fruit.
- Offer more water to drink.
- Talk to your health care provider if you have concerns.

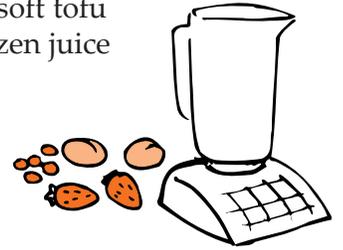


*Constipation is hard, difficult to pass bowel movements.

Recipes

Fruit Smoothies

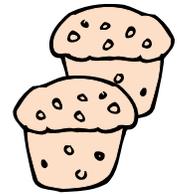
- 250 ml (1 cup) yogurt or soft tofu
- 60 ml (4 tablespoons) frozen juice concentrate
- 250 ml (1 cup) peaches, bananas or other ripe fruit (fresh, frozen or canned with no added sugar)



Put all the ingredients in an electric blender. Blend until smooth.

Oatmeal Muffins

- 250 ml (1 cup) rolled oats
- 250 ml (1 cup) buttermilk or plain yogurt
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) vegetable oil
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) brown sugar
- 1 egg, beaten
- 5 ml (1 tsp) vanilla (optional)
- 250 ml (1 cup) chopped dates or other dried fruit
- 250 ml (1 cup) flour
- 2 ml (1/2 tsp) salt
- 2 ml (1/2 tsp) baking soda
- 7 ml (1 1/2 tsp) baking powder



Soak the oats in the buttermilk. Heat the oven to 400 degrees. Grease the pans.

To the oatmeal mixture, add the oil, brown sugar, egg, vanilla, and dates. Mix the flour, salt, soda, and baking powder together. Add this to the oatmeal mixture and stir only long enough to moisten. Spoon into greased muffin pans and bake at 400 degrees for 15-20 minutes, until golden.

Bean Dip

(to spread on crackers or bread or serve with vegetables)

Mix together:

- 1 small can (398 ml or 14 oz) rinsed black beans
- 80 ml (1/3 cup) yogurt
- 2 green onions, chopped
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) coriander or parsley
- 5 ml (1 tsp) cumin/chili powder or less
- 1 clove garlic or 1 ml (1/8 tsp) garlic powder (optional)



Food Safety

- When you are packing snacks for daycare or outings, keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Use a thermos (vacuum jar) or cold pack to keep food from spoiling.
- Avoid raw eggs, fish, meat and chicken.
- Limit processed deli meats
- Always wash hands before handling food and before eating



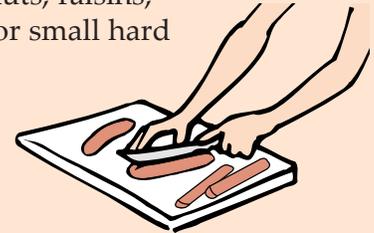
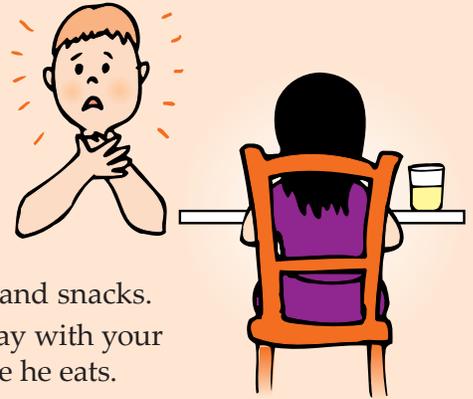
Tooth Decay

- Limit dried fruit, fruit leathers, and sticky or starchy foods (eg. crackers, chips, cereal) to times when you can brush teeth afterwards.
- If you are not able to brush teeth after meals and snacks, serve water or cheese to help clear sugar from the mouth.



Choking

- Eating on the run can cause choking. Have children sit down for meals and snacks.
- Always stay with your child while he eats.
- Do not give children under 4 years old small hard candies, gum, popcorn, nuts, raisins, fish with bones or small hard pieces of food.
- Hard vegetables such as carrots should be cooked.
- Cut foods such as grapes and hot dogs down the middle, then into small pieces to help prevent choking.
- Peanut butter served alone, or on a spoon is too sticky for young children. Spread peanut butter thinly on toast or crackers.



Choose foods grown or produced in BC whenever you can.

Other fact sheets on feeding and parenting your young child are available at your local Community Health Office/Centre or online at <http://vch.eduhealth.ca>

For more information, call:

A Community Nutritionist or Public Health Nurse at Vancouver Coastal Health
www.vch.ca

Dial-a-Dietitian - Services available in 130 languages 604-732-9191
www.dialadietitian.org Toll free 1-800-667-3438

HealthLink BC - Speak with a nurse, pharmacist, or dietitian.
 Services available in 130 languages

www.healthlink.bc.ca 811
 For deaf and hearing-impaired assistance (TTY), call 711

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