

Snacks

Main objectives: To introduce snacks as an important and healthy part of the day. Snacks should be thought of as pretty much identical to meals, only smaller. All of the same healthy tips apply.

Essential Discussion Topics:

- *What is a snack?* Ask who has had a snack today and what they ate. Encourage honesty; there are likely some unhealthy snacks in the room. Have the students list examples of snacks. Finally, ask the class what their definition of a snack is. Our definition of a snack should be a small meal eaten between breakfast, lunch and dinner that helps to keep us from getting overly hungry during the day and to give us energy throughout the day.
- *Snacks are really just small meals.* This is important, because we can use the same guidelines from our past lessons to help think of healthy snacks.
 - Since snacks aren't very large, a good goal is to try and incorporate at least 2 of the food categories from the Healthy Eating Plate (i.e. fruits & veggies, whole grains and proteins). Why? Combining these different nutrients, aside from the obvious nutritional benefit, helps to make more satisfying snacks that will keep you from getting hungry later on. For instance, things like Greek yogurt with fruit, or nuts with dried fruit, or cheese and whole grain crackers all combine different nutrients. The fiber in whole grains, as well as foods with protein, generally helps increase satiety.
- *What makes unhealthy snacks so unhealthy?* Have students list unhealthy snacks. Discuss why some choices for snacks would be considered unhealthy. For example, potato chips and other bag items don't fill you up very much, and don't give you good 'sustained' energy. Sugary foods do the same. What is common about these snacks? Usually, they are not very balanced with multiple food groups.

Supplemental Discussion Topics:

- *Snacking for sports and activities.* Healthy snacking is important to fuel their best performance in school, sports and other activities. Healthy snacks provide the energy to work hard and concentrate in all aspects of life. Sugary snack and other types of junk food, on the other hand, will probably leave them feeling more tired or unable to run around (due to stomach ache, etc.). For this reason, putting together a good snack, especially one with a good mix of carbohydrates, fat and protein will help them feel better. Sports drinks can be a confusing subject because they are often thought of as being healthy, but may actually contain a lot of sugar. Sports drinks can replenish important electrolyte and sugar losses from a long workout. For regular activity, however, water does the trick just fine. It's important to stay hydrated whenever you're being active!

Activities:

- *Snack making competition.* Split the class into two different teams. Each team will get an identical list of basic ingredients. The groups will be given 5 minutes to think of as

many combinations as possible for snacks that include at least 2 different food components (carbohydrate, fruits & veggies, healthy fat, or protein). Teams will get 1 point for each item listed. Add up the scores to see which team has more. Once finished, have the students choose a few of the snack combinations that they think they may try in the future.

Snack Ideas:

- *Healthy Apple Nachos.* Thinly slice 4 large apples. Arrange on a plate, overlapping slightly, like a plate of regular nachos. Drizzle several tablespoons of nut butter over apple slices (almond butter is often thinner in consistency, or may have to heat peanut butter for a few seconds in the microwave to make pourable). Top with a sprinkle of granola, dried cranberries, mini chocolate chips, etc.
- *Rainbow fruit kabob.* Have students make their own or bring them already prepared. Start with wooden skewers. Create a rainbow of fruit by adding a strawberry, orange segment, piece of pineapple, slice of kiwi, several blueberries, and a red grape.
- *Turkey Pinwheels.* Start with a large tortilla (could use multigrain or green spinach or red sun-dried tomato tortillas to add flavor and nutrients). Spread with a low-fat flavored cheese spread. Create a layer of spinach leaves. Layer slices of thinly cut deli turkey meat. Add a row of thinly sliced red bell pepper on one edge. Roll tortilla beginning with the bell pepper edge, to make a log. Cut log into one-inch slices. Serve each student 2-3 slices.