

# Offer Healthy Snacks

## Overview

Due to challenges with school scheduling, it's not uncommon for students to eat an early or late school lunch. This can result in kids being hungry during or after the school day, and needing snacks to keep their busy bodies and minds going. In addition to nourishing bodies, snacks provide an opportunity to practice healthy eating habits.



## Take Action

- Complete an inventory of snacks sold or served at school: Are snacks provided in the classroom? Does your school have a vending machine or a school store? Are students allowed to consume snacks in the classroom?
- [Host a taste test](#) to sample new snack options.
- Educate school staff and students about healthy choices through [posters](#), school news articles and the school announcements.
- Promote healthy snacks each month on a healthy bulletin board in the main office.
- Ask if the school can put a fruit bowl (instead of candy) in the front office, available for staff, students and parents to help themselves.

## Sharing Healthy Snacks

- Create a classroom chart that tracks when students bring in fruit, vegetables, low-fat or fat-free dairy, or a whole grain for a snack. Set a classroom goal and

infuse nutrition education into the conversation.

- Emphasize the importance of healthy snacks at school and home through events like parent-teacher conferences when you have a built-in audience.
- [Host a P.A.C.K. Week](#) at your school where students bring in a different colored fruit or vegetable as a snack each day.
- Use these healthy [food art](#) snack ideas as part of a classroom nutrition education lesson, birthday celebration, or for a morning snack.
- Partner with parents to establish a monthly snack program where parents bring in a snack for everyone once per month.
- If your school qualifies, join the [Fresh Fruit and Vegetable program](#) for free, regular snacks for students and staff.
- Host a healthy snack competition with students: Provide a list of common [fruits, veggies, dairy](#), protein and [grains](#) and challenge students to build a healthy snack with three or more ingredients. Ask students to post their healthy snack on social media or bring it in to share. Let their peers vote on their favorite snack!

## Selling Healthy Snacks

- Work with your school nutrition staff to make sure all snacks sold at school meet [Smart Snacks Standards](#).
- If your school has a [vending machine](#), institute a “Healthy Snack of the Month” and promote it among students and staff. Place a sticker on the bottom of one of the highlighted snack products and offer a healthy prize to the lucky recipient.
- Sell healthy snacks for [school fundraisers](#), in the [school store](#), or at concession stands.

## Tips



Pay attention to serving sizes: What a kindergartener consumes for a snack should look different than what an older student eats



Keep snacks simple and convenient.

that what an older student eats.



Offer healthy snacks in multiple settings for students - in the classroom, in the cafeteria, for school fundraisers, and at home.



Seek community partners that could help your school provide healthy snacks. For example, partner with the local grocery store for donations.



Check out the [Smart Snacks Standards](#) to learn about allowable snacks. While these requirements apply to all foods sold on campus during the school day, it's a good idea to offer a variety of healthy items at all food venues to reinforce healthy choices.



Encourage teachers to be [healthy role models](#) by choosing healthy snacks themselves.



Practice what you preach! Offer healthy snacks and beverages at all school events.



Survey students to determine the kinds of healthy snacks they want to see at school, then incorporate their suggestions to let them know their opinion is valued.



If you anticipate opposition to providing healthier snacks, start small. Serve less of the less healthy snacks while gradually increasing the healthier options until students are accustomed to healthier snack options.

## Additional Resources

[Healthy School Snacks Tip Sheet \(Action for Healthy Kids\)](#)

[Healthy Food Ideas Tip Sheet \(Action for Healthy Kids\)](#)

[MyPlate Snack Tips for Parents \(USDA\)](#)

[Smart Snack Calculator \(Alliance for a Healthier Generation\)](#)

[Go, Slow, Whoa \(We Can!\)](#)

[Look and Cook Recipes for Younger Children \(USDA\)](#)

## Related Activities

### Healthy Vending

Whether the vending machine is available to students or just staff, providing healthy vending options is key to your school's success in creating a healthier environment.

### Smart Snacks Standards

Is your school smart snack savvy? The "Smart Snacks in School" rule set standards for all foods and beverages sold in schools that participate in the national school meal program.

### More Water, Please!

### Second Chance Breakfast

One of the easiest ways of ensuring kids, school staff and families drink more water is to make water more accessible and fun throughout the day.

A hungry stomach can lead to an unfocused mind. Second Chance breakfast offers a breakfast break in the morning, often after first period for older students in secondary schools.