



Snacking Healthy

Article written by Ann Fenton (afenton1@unl.edu), Extension Educator in Pierce County

“Mom, I’m hungry!”

These words can make a parent cringe, especially when it is close to mealtime. Younger children can get cranky if they are hungry, as can older kids who come home famished and need something to tide them over until the next meal.

Snacks can play an important role in aiding nutrition goals by getting the necessary nutrients when you have a busy schedule and meals aren’t as nutritious as normal. The best snacks are low in sugar, fat, and salt and between 100 and 200 calories. Good choices include fruits and vegetables, whole grains such as bread, crackers or cereal and protein foods such as peanut butter.

Timing of a snack can play an important role in how the children eat. Pay attention to portion sizes and timing of snacks so they don’t interfere with a child’s appetite for the



next meal. Try structuring meal and snack time. Offer the meals and snacks at the same times each day, and your kids can decide what they want to eat and how much.

Fruit and Yogurt Oatmeal

- 1/3 cup oatmeal (dry, quick-cooking)
- ¾ cup low-fat milk or water
- ½ cup strawberries, sliced bananas or other fruit, washed
- ½ cup low-fat yogurt or frozen yogurt

Directions

1. Wash hands with soap and water. In a microwave safe cereal bowl, mix together the oatmeal and the milk or water.
2. Microwave on high power for 1 minute. Stir. Microwave an additional 30-60 seconds on high power until the cereal reaches the desired thickness. Stir again.
3. Top with fruit and yogurt. Makes two servings. Each serving contains 153 calories, 1.2 g fat, 220 mg sodium, 28 g carbohydrate, 18 g sugars, 8 g protein.



For more information check out Food Fun for Young Children:

<https://go.unl.edu/foodfunchildren>

Here are some snacks that kids might enjoy:

- Cut-up fruit or applesauce
- Sliced veggies
- Yogurt dip with fruit or veggies
- Whole-grain crackers or pretzels
- Low-sugar, whole-grain breakfast cereal with milk
- Low-fat string cheese
- Smoothies made with yogurt and fruit
- Apple slices with peanut butter
- Cottage cheese with flaxseeds and cinnamon
- Celery sticks with cream cheese

Sources:

1. *Smart Snacking, KidsHealth by the Nemours Foundation:* <https://bit.ly/2UIDd16>
2. *What’s Cooking? USDA Mixing Bowl, Banana Split Oatmeal:* <https://bit.ly/2x0TScQ>