

# Snacks can be nutritious, too

by Monine Strode-Stebbins  
OSU Extension Service

Planning nutritious and low-cost meals requires thought and skill. You have to give time and attention to plan menus, make shopping lists, do the shopping and manage the food after you get it home. You choose recipes, cook and clean up after the meal. All this attention given to food can sometimes make food the center of your universe. You get lots of attention when you cook something special, and most of us enjoy the social aspects of eating, too.

This emphasis on food can create problems. One of those problems is overeating. You were probably encouraged as a child to "clean up your plate" so the food would not be wasted.

Food can take on all kinds of meaning. Sweets are often used as a reward when someone has been good or done something special. Food can also be used as comfort or consolation. If things go wrong in your world, maybe a little food will "make it better."

Sometimes we eat because we're bored. If there's "nothing to do," we often start looking in the cupboards or refrigerator for something to liven things up.

Food is also given to express love. "I made this especially for you!" becomes an invitation to eat the special food or reject the person who made it.

The way children are fed can lead to lifelong good eating habits. As we study more about nutrition, we have changed the recommendations for feeding young children. When my children were babies, you started them out on solid foods early. The idea was that you wanted to keep their tummies full so they'd sleep through the night and not be fussy. Research now shows that the first solid food baby should eat is a baby cereal that is iron-fortified at five or six months of age. They should be introduced to fruits, vegetables and meat one at a time at seven or eight months. Some feel that early introduction of foods other than milk leads to allergies and/or overweight.

There is also a strong feeling that you should avoid encouraging children to eat more than they want. It teaches them to ignore the body signals of fullness. It may lead to a lifetime of overeating and obesity.

On the other hand, we hear more and more about teenagers, especially girls, who are suffering from Anorexia Nervosa, an eating pattern that is self-imposed starvation. When Anorexia Nervosa patients were studied in Australia, they generally scored higher on a test of their nutrition knowledge. Even though they know what they need for good health, they have a distorted idea of what they body should look like, and feel that they are much too fat even when they are emaciated.

So what's the answer? Setting a good example in your own eating habits is important. Having a pleasant atmosphere at the table can set a

relaxed mood that encourages family members to share their experience with each other. Making a regular time for meals and snacks, and having good choices available, also sets up a routine that will help them develop good eating habits. Suggesting other kinds of family togetherness, such as playing games, biking, or walking together can help avoid boredom or overemphasis on eating.

Relax, you're probably having more influence than you suspect. I had decided my kids never listened to me. But now that they're grown, I hear them admonishing their partners with about the same lines I used on them. It's delightful to see them taking good care of themselves and the people they love.

Serving fruit as a dessert or snack is a good choice. It's pretty, colorful and nutritious. This time of year, you can make a rainbow of fruit on a platter, or arrange layers of contrasting colors of fruit in a glass bowl. It needs no dressing up to be attractive.

Here are a couple of easy and nutritious recipes that feature fruit:

### FRUIT ICES

1 cup fresh, frozen or canned fruit, or 3 ounces of frozen juice concentrate, partially thawed  
2 cups crushed ice

Put ingredients into blender container, cover and process at highest setting. Using rubber spatula to help

guide ice into processing blades. When contents are snowy consistency serve at once. Yields about 2 cups or 4 servings, about 45 calories per serving.

### PINEAPPLE & ORANGE COMPOTE

2 13 1/4 ounce cans pineapple chunks, drained or four cups fresh pineapple  
1 cup orange juice  
1 cup miniature marshmallows

About 1 hour before serving: In large bowl, gently toss all ingredients to mix well; cover and refrigerate 45 minutes to blend flavors and soften marshmallows. Makes 6 servings; 90 calories per serving.

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- September 12**  
Mexican Taco  
Shredded Lettuce and Tomato  
Whole Kernel Corn  
Apple Wedges  
Milk
- September 13**  
Turkey Pot Pie  
Tossed Garden Greens w/French Dressing  
Whole Wheat Roll  
Fresh Grapes  
Milk
- September 14**  
Hawaiian Pizza  
Carrot Coins w/Peanut Butter Dip  
Fresh Pear Half  
Nibbles  
Milk
- September 15**  
Country Style Steak and Gravy  
Whipped Potatoes  
Orange Half  
Pumpkin Bread  
Milk
- September 16**  
Hot Ham and Cheese Sandwich  
French Fries  
Celery Chunk w/Ranch Dip  
Cantaloupe Wedge  
Milk