

Wellness Program offers information on nutritional snacks

This information is provided by the Vernonia School District Wellness Program

Will your family be satisfied with nutritious food for snacks?

It all depends on how you present those foods. A few

guidelines to help ensure smiles:

1. Offer nutritious foods with a smile and a pleasant enthusiastic tone of voice. Do not assume everyone would rather have a candy bar, chips, or a soft drink. Eat nutritious snacks yourself—children,

enjoy what they see others enjoying.

2. Convenience is important. Instead of reaching in a cookie jar, children might reach for an orange if it is peeled, sectioned and ready to eat. Other times, involve children in preparing their own foods, from helping in the garden, to washing and cutting up vegetables, to preparing simple recipes.

3. Don't make a practice of keeping foods like candy chips and soft drinks on hand. Remember, "Out of sight — out of mind."

4. Do not expect miracles. Those who are used to an array of chips, cookies, soft drinks and candy, may not accept with great enthusiasm your first attempt to provide them with alternatives. Start slowly and try a variety of new ideas. Even better, start them on nutritious snacks right from the beginning.

5. Food provides the body with nutrition. It should be used for that purpose and not as a bribe, reward, or punishment.

It's midafternoon, two hours until dinner time. The cookie jar looks inviting; unwrapping a candy bar is so easy, popping open a soft drink is effortless and fast. But wait: Is it good for you or your children?

This is the "Snacking Generation" and that can be okay, depending on what snacks you choose. Small portions of nutritious snacks eaten at the same time each day—not constant nibbling between meals—can contribute positively toward health. Snacking the nutrient-rich way is a key to top performance in mental and physical activities.

Watch the sugar content of foods. Foods high in sugar rarely help provide needed vitamins, minerals and protein. In addition they combine with bacteria in the mouth to form an acid that may cause tooth decay.

How to make good food fun to eat

Crackers come in triangles, circles, squares, or rectangles. Match cheese to these shapes by cutting free hand or by using miniature cookie cutters.

Serve apple wedges with finger length cheese sticks. Vary the type of cheese—cheddar, colby, brick, Swiss, lowfat mozzarella, etc. For summer fun, make sailboats: An apple wedge makes the boat, a cheese cube on a pretzel stick or toothpick makes a sail.

Peas, corn, grapes bananas, berries and raisins become treats when served frozen in bright colored paper

or plastic cups.

Purchase unsweetened fruit juice in child-size bottles. Save the bottles and refill using juice or milk purchased in more economical large containers.

Stuff celery with cream cheese, cheese spread or peanut butter without sugar.

Slice banana in half lengthwise. Spread each cut edge with peanut butter. Top with any combination of nuts, chocolate chips or raisins; put halves back together.

Fill ice cube trays with a variety of unsweetened fruit juices. Pour unsweetened fruit juice in glasses and add the fruit juice cubes.

Pour warm soup into mugs so children can drink it rather than having to contend with spills from a spoon.

Grow alfalfa sprouts in your kitchen. Children can pick their own sprouts to put on their salads or sandwiches.

Inspired to change your family's snacking habits? Here are some easy-to-prepare recipes to help you get started.

Sunshine Milk

Mix in blender: 1 small chilled banana, peeled and sliced; 1 cup sliced fresh or unsweetened frozen strawberries, thawed; 1/8 tsp. almond extract; 1/4 cup orange juice; 1-1/2 cup cold milk

Serve in chilled glasses.

Yields 3-1/2 cups at 103 calories per cup.

Creamy Orange Pops

Mix with hand or electric beater, wire whip, or blender: 1 can (6 oz.) unsweetened frozen pineapple/orange juice concentrate, partially thawed; 1 cup milk or evaporated milk; 1 cup plain yogurt.

Pour into molds and freeze.

Calories per 2 oz. serving—130.

Apple Pinwheel

Core an apple. Stuff the opening with cream cheese, cheese spread or peanut butter without sugar. Chill.

To serve, slice crosswise. Calories per apple—180.



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