

## HEALTHY SCHOOL SNACKS

**Parents:** Check with the teacher about allergies before sending snacks for the class. **Food Service Directors & School Administrators:** The Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) Nutrition Standards for Competitive Foods in Pennsylvania Schools do not address “snack time.” Schools that provide a routine snack must include nutrition guidelines for snacks in their wellness policy.

### Fruit



...Try fresh, dried, canned, frozen and pre-cut, ready-to-eat fruit. ... Children need about 1 ½ cups (3 child-size fistfuls) of fruit a day.<sup>1</sup> Offer softer fruit or sliced apples or pears to young children who are missing teeth. ... Wash fruit thoroughly.

**Serving Ideas:** 🍏 Two apple wedges + peanut butter or low-fat cream cheese filling + puffed wheat or raisin “teeth” = apple smiles. 🍌 Layer banana slices with vanilla yogurt and frozen berries. 🍍 Make a pineapple and strawberry fruit kabob. 🍌 Show kids how to scoop and eat kiwi halves with a spoon. 🍌 Have students make trail mix by combining equal portions of dried chopped dates or figs, coconut and dried cranberries. 🍇 Put grapes and bananas on a wooden skewer and freeze for fruit on a stick. 🍏 Try sliced fruit on peanut butter sandwiches instead of jam. 🍌 Plums are nature’s “fast food”— fresh or dried, they don’t make a mess.

### Vegetables



... Children need about 1 ½ cups (3 child-size fistfuls) of vegetables a day.<sup>1</sup>  
... Wash vegetables thoroughly.

**Serving Ideas:** 🥦 Dip cauliflower florets, celery sticks or strips of red, green, yellow or purple sweet peppers into low-fat dressing. 🥕 Try ready-to-eat vegetable “snack packs.” 🥕 Bite-sized veggies can be fun! Try radish roses, carrot curls or turnip stars.

### Milk Group Foods



...Cheese: reduced-fat or low-fat cheddar, Colby, cottage, Monterrey Jack, mozzarella, string or other reduced-fat cheeses packaged and shaped in a variety of ways.  
...Yogurt and pudding: non-fat and 1% yogurt and vitamin-D fortified yogurt or pudding.  
... Non-fat and 1% unflavored and flavored milk.

**Serving Ideas:** What bright green vegetable do kids like when they can dip it in cheese sauce? It's broccoli, according to food service director Barbara Randazzo.<sup>2</sup> Her secret is to bake frozen broccoli, lightly salted, in a convection oven for 20 minutes, adding just a little water to the broccoli before covering it and starting the cooking process. The important thing is to not overcook it. Keeping the broccoli green and crunchy is what children like, Randazzo says. Remove pan from heat while still green, add a small amount of butter for flavor. Hold in a warmer (don't continue to cook) & top with cheese sauce!

**Light Cheese Sauce**  
(fills approximately 16 soufflé cups, 2 Tablespoons each)

4 teaspoons all-purpose flour  
1 cup skim milk, divided  
1/2 cup grated reduced-fat cheese (preferably cheddar)  
1 teaspoon dry mustard  
1/2 teaspoon sweet paprika  
Cayenne pepper to taste (optional)  
1/4 teaspoon salt

Whisk flour with 2 tablespoons milk in a small bowl until smooth. Heat the remaining milk in a small saucepan over medium heat until steaming. Add the flour mixture and cook, whisking constantly, until the sauce bubbles and thickens, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from the heat; stir in cheese, dry mustard, paprika, cayenne (if using) and salt.  
**NUTRITION INFORMATION:** Per Tablespoon: 30 calories; 1 g fat, 45 mg sodium, 40 milligrams calcium. **MAKE AHEAD TIP:** Cover and refrigerate for up to 2 days. Reheat before serving.

**Grains**



... Half the grains you eat should be whole grains. ... Whole-grain snacks list a whole grain as a first ingredient. For example: whole wheat flour, whole grain corn, whole oats, oatmeal, etc. High-fiber snacks contain two or more grams of fiber per serving. Either whole-grain snacks or high-fiber snacks are the best grain-based snack choices.

**Serving Ideas:** ▲ Instead of potato chips, try baked tortilla chips with salsa. ▲ Try to choose mostly snacks that contain less than 200 milligrams of sodium per serving. ▲ Many traditional favorites are now available in whole-grain versions. Also try mixing a favorite cracker with equal parts whole-grain crackers. For example, mix regular goldfish pretzels with whole-grain goldfish crackers. ▲ Try mini bran muffins; whole-grain cereals, crackers or ridged chips<sup>3</sup>; whole wheat fig and mini fig newtons; granola or whole-grain cereal bars; oatmeal or oatmeal raisin cookies with > 2 grams of fiber per serving; air-popped, light or low-fat popcorn; whole-grain pretzels or whole-grain soft pretzels; rye crisp crackers; and plain or herb-flavored woven wheat crackers. ▲ Regular versions of traditional favorites, such as animal and graham crackers, are okay once in awhile, too! ▲ Children like whole wheat sugar cookies made with ½ white and ½ whole wheat flour (rather than all whole wheat flour).<sup>4</sup> Be sure to add a little extra milk to prevent dryness.

<sup>1</sup> For more information, go to: <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org>

<sup>2</sup> Barbara Randazzo is Food Service Director at St. Margaret of Scotland School, Pittsburgh, PA

<sup>3</sup> A list of whole grain snacks is available at: [www.wholegrainscouncil.org](http://www.wholegrainscouncil.org)

<sup>4</sup> Recipe idea from NutriKids

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PDE *Healthy School Snacks* (G: SCHOOL NUTRITION INITIATIVE: Snack List)