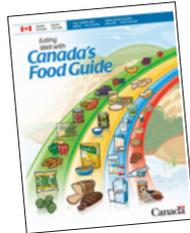




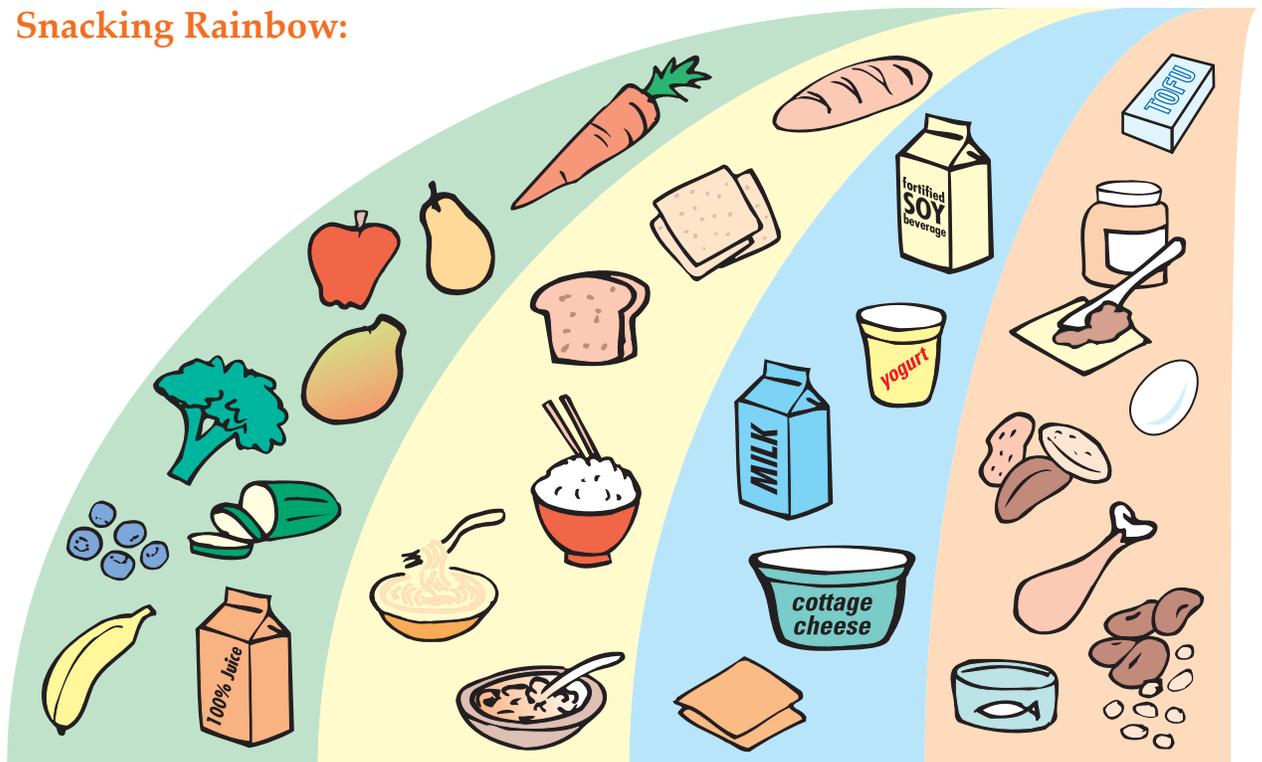
Healthy Snacks for Preschoolers (3 to 5 years)

Healthy snacks are important for young children to eat every day. This gives them energy to grow, play and learn. Think of snacks as “mini-meals”.



Plan your child’s snacks using at least 2 of the 4 food groups from Canada’s Food Guide. Children should be offered 3 meals and 2 to 3 snacks each day.

Snacking Rainbow:



Vegetables & Fruits

Vegetables* such as carrots, cucumber, broccoli, cauliflower, roasted yams, beets, parsnips; or fruit* (fresh, frozen and thawed or canned without sugar added) such as pear, blueberries, apple, peaches, mango, watermelon and banana

Grain Products

Whole wheat bread or buns, roti, tortillas, pasta and noodles, rice, bannock, barley, quinoa, whole grain cereal, whole grain crackers

Milk & Alternatives

Milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, cheese (cut into cubes, grated or melted), fortified soy beverage, kefir

Meat & Alternatives

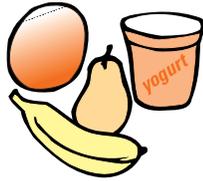
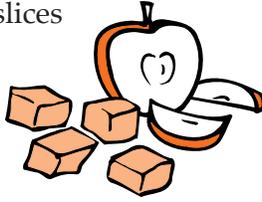
Cooked meat, chicken or fish, cooked egg, baked beans, lentils or chickpeas, split peas, cooked tofu cubes, hummus or bean dip, smooth peanut or other nut/seed butter*, nuts* and seeds*

*Read the information about choking on page 4.

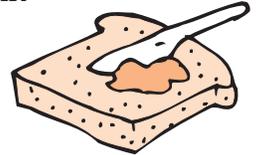
Offer a variety of snacks to make sure children get all the nutrients they need to grow.

Snack ideas

- Celery and red pepper sticks with bean dip or hummus
- Cheese cubes with apple slices
- Nut or seed butter on toast (eg. peanut, almond, sunflower seed butter)
- Canned salmon rolled into flour tortillas
- Yogurt and sliced banana
- Egg salad sandwich
- Whole grain crackers and cheese
- Steamed meat bun
- Soft cooked edamame and orange slices



- Baked beans and whole wheat toast
- Fruit and yogurt smoothie
- Roti and dal
- Crushed pineapple, canned in water, and a small muffin
- Mini pizzas on whole wheat English muffins
- Leftover chicken, rice and vegetables
- Steamed broccoli with yogurt dip
- Baked potato with cheese and salsa
- Quesadilla: beans and cheese melted into a flour tortilla
- Whole grain cereal* with milk and berries

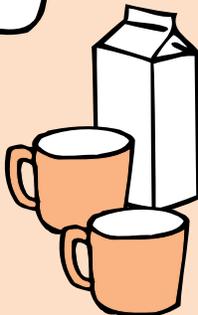


*Cereals

- Choose whole grain cereals with less than 5 grams of sugar per serving if the cereal does not contain fruit. Aim for 10 grams or less if it does contain fruit. Avoid cereals with artificial colours.

Drinks

- Use a cup instead of a bottle.
- Water – Give your child water to drink when he is thirsty in-between meals.
- Milk – Young children need only 500 mL (2 cups) of milk each day. Other “milk” drinks (such as rice, almond, coconut, and hemp) are lower in protein than milk and should not be used as a substitute for it.



- Juice – Children don't need juice. If you decide to give juice, choose 100% juice and offer it in a cup as part of a meal or snack, no more than 2 times per day. Give no more than 125 ml ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) per day.



- Unpasteurized milk and juice may contain bacteria that can make children and adults very sick. Offer only pasteurized milk and juice.

- Pop, fruit “drinks” and sport drinks are not healthy choices.



Common Concerns

Will snacks spoil my child's appetite for meals?

- Children have small stomachs and need to eat more often than adults. They may eat small amounts at family meal times.
- Snacks give you the chance to offer other healthy foods they may not eat at a meal, such as vegetables and dip.



My child snacks all day as he is playing. Is this okay?

- No. Constant eating and drinking may make children less hungry at meal times and sipping drinks and eating snacks all day long may cause tooth decay. Offer small snacks at set times between meals.



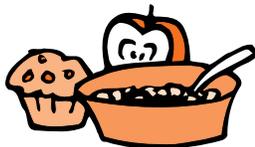
My child is so cranky at dinner time, she eats very little.

- Children are often so tired and hungry at dinner time they will not sit and eat well. Plan family meals earlier or offer a small, healthy snack 2–3 hours before dinner. It's fine if she eats a smaller meal at dinner time.



My child sometimes gets constipated*, what should I feed him to prevent this?

- Offer foods that are good sources of fibre such as whole grains (e.g. whole grain bread, oatmeal, bran cereals, quinoa and brown rice), legumes (e.g. black beans, chick peas, lentils), vegetables and fruits (e.g. stewed or cut up prunes and other unsweetened dried fruit, berries, apples, pears and peas).
- Offer more water to drink.
- Talk to your health care provider if you have concerns.

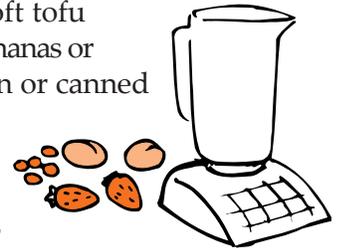


Recipes

Fruit Smoothies

250 ml (1 cup) yogurt or soft tofu
250 ml (1 cup) peaches, bananas or other ripe fruit (fresh, frozen or canned with no added sugar)

Put all the ingredients in an electric blender. Blend until smooth. Add water or milk if too thick.



Banana Applesauce Muffins

500 ml (2 cups) whole wheat flour

15 ml (1 tbsp) baking powder

5 ml (1 tsp) baking soda

2 ml (½ tsp) salt

3 (1 ½ cups/325 ml) ripe bananas, mashed

1 egg, lightly beaten

250 ml (1 cup) unsweetened applesauce

125 ml (½ cup) granulated sugar

50 ml (¼ cup) vegetable oil

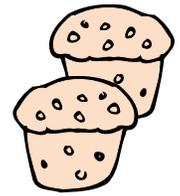
Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Lightly grease or line with paper cups a 12 cup muffin tin.

In a large bowl, combine flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt.

In a medium bowl, combine bananas, egg, applesauce, sugar and oil. Stir into flour mixture until just combined.

Divide batter evenly among prepared muffins cups.

Bake in preheated oven for 15 to 20 minutes or until tops are firm to the touch and a tester inserted in the centre of a muffin comes out clean. Let cool in tin for 10 minutes, then remove to a wire rack to cool completely.



Bean Dip

(to spread on crackers or bread or serve with vegetables)

Mix together:

1 small can (398 ml or 14 oz) rinsed black beans

80 ml (1/3 cup) yogurt

2 green onions, chopped

30 ml (2 tbsp) coriander or parsley

5 ml (1 tsp) cumin/chili powder or less

1 clove garlic or 1 ml (1/8 tsp) garlic powder (optional)



*Constipation is hard, difficult to pass bowel movements.

Food Safety



- When you are packing snacks for daycare or outings, keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Use a thermos (vacuum jar) or cold pack to keep food from spoiling.
- Do not offer raw eggs, fish, meat, chicken, bean sprouts or sushi made with raw fish. Ensure all of these foods are fully cooked.
- Limit processed deli meats
- Always wash hands before handling food and before eating

Tooth Decay



- Brushing your child's teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste should keep their teeth healthy if they are served 3 meals and 2 to 3 planned healthy snacks each day, and drink water between meals and snacks.
- Tooth brushing is the only way to remove the bacteria that cause tooth decay.
- Limit sticky, sugary foods and sweet drinks.
- Some healthy snacks have high natural sugars and stick to teeth (eg. dried fruit and 100% fruit leathers and fruit gummies). Serve these snack less often.
- Eating hard cheese (cheddar/Swiss) after a sugary snack may help protect teeth.

Choking

- Eating on the run can cause choking. Have children sit down for meals and snacks.



- Always stay with your child while he eats.
- Do not give children under 4 years old small hard candies, gum, popcorn, nuts and seeds, raisins, fish with bones or small hard pieces of food.



- Hard vegetables such as carrots should be cooked.
- Cut foods such as grapes and hot dogs down the middle, then into small pieces to help prevent choking.
- Peanut butter served alone, or on a spoon is too sticky for young children. Spread peanut butter thinly on toast or crackers.



Choose foods grown or produced in BC whenever you can.

Other fact sheets on feeding and parenting your young child are available at your local Community Health Office/Centre or online at <http://vch.eduhealth.ca>

For more information, call:

Dietitian Services at HealthLink BC.....Dial 8-1-1 to speak to a Dietitian
Translation services are available in 130 languageswww.healthlinkbc.ca/dietitian/
or a Public Health Nurse at Vancouver Coastal Health www.vch.ca
VCH Parenting Website<http://parenting.vch.ca>

Banana Applesauce Muffins recipe:
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