

SNACKS & DENTAL HEALTH

Hints for Parents & Kids



Snacking is important for children. They have small tummies and growing bodies that require lots of energy! They need to eat smaller amounts of food more often during the day. Think of snacks as “mini-meals”. Choose foods from all four food groups in Canada’s Food Guide when planning snacks.



FOLLOW THESE TIPS FOR HEALTHY SNACKS EVERY DAY

1 Choose nutritious snack foods

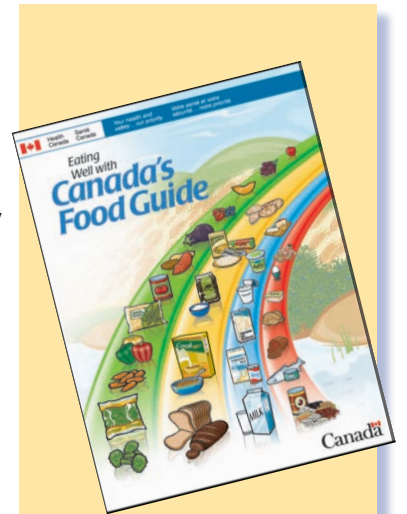
Follow the rainbow in Canada’s Food Guide for healthy snacks that are good for a growing body. Choose foods from at least 2 food groups when planning snacks.

2 Limit the number of snacks each day

Offer a snack if your child is hungry. Plan no more than 2 or 3 snacks each day, and serve at the same time each day. This will help prevent constant nibbling and reduce the risk of tooth decay.

3 Offer a variety of snacks

Plan different snacks every day to get a wide variety of nutrients. Wholesome foods like milk, whole grain cereal and crackers, yogurt, fruit, cheese, bean spreads (i.e.: hummus), meat, natural nut butters and nuts are all great choices.



FIND
Canada’s Food Guide at:
<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/>

Good Sense SNACK FOODS

- ❑ Cheese cut in fun shapes on crackers
- ❑ “Jiffy Pizza”: toasted English muffin & pizza sauce with cheese & veggies
- ❑ A rainbow of raw or partially cooked veggies & yogurt dip
- ❑ Fruit shake for two: blend ¾ cup of milk, ¾ cup of fruit and ¾ cup of yogurt
- ❑ Chocolate milk & whole grain crackers
- ❑ Natural peanut butter on whole grain crackers
- ❑ Pita bread & hummus (chickpea dip)
- ❑ Yogurt & fresh fruit
- ❑ Nuts
- ❑ Oven baked pita chips & salsa
- ❑ Whole grain cereal with milk
- ❑ Apple or pear slices and cheese



- ❑ Whole grain pita stuffed with lettuce, tomato, cucumber & yogurt dressing
- ❑ Soft tortilla & cheese folded and heated
- ❑ Flaked tuna or salmon, chopped celery with a small amount of mayo, on crackers or mini pitas



DID YOU KNOW?

- ❑ Preschoolers get nearly 1/3 of their energy from snacks each day.
- ❑ Planning snacks can help prevent overeating.
- ❑ It can take several tries for a child to accept a new food. Try offering the new food with a familiar food... and be patient!



SNACK IDEA

Shake-a-Pudding

½ cup (125 mL) milk
3 Tbsp (45 mL) instant pudding mix
(*must be instant*)

Place ingredients in a small jar, leaving the jar half empty for shaking purposes. Secure lid. Shake about 2 minutes until thickened. Ready to eat!

This is an easy & fun recipe your children can shake up themselves!





TO KEEP A HEALTHY SMILE!

- Brush at least twice a day. Be sure to clean the surfaces of teeth and along the gumline where plaque collects.
- Floss children's teeth daily as soon as there is contact between the teeth.
- Eat a piece of cheese, rinse your mouth with water or chew a piece of sugarless gum if you can't brush after a meal or snack.
- Remember that sweets and sugary foods should only be eaten once in a while.
- Have regular dental check ups.
- Supervise young children brushing their teeth.

What causes TOOTH DECAY?

Cavities begin when the bacteria found in the plaque on teeth mixes with the sugar or starch in food. This produces acid that can eat away tooth enamel causing tooth decay, especially at night when saliva flow is very low. Cavity producing acid bathes teeth for about 20 minutes every time you eat starchy or sugary foods.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Choose healthy snacks (cheese, vegetables, fruit and nuts).
- Choose foods that don't stick to teeth.
- Eat sweet foods at mealtime rather than as a snack.
- Brush teeth regularly (to remove plaque and food particles) and as soon as you can after snacking.
- Limit between meal snacks to no more than 2 or 3 a day.



DID YOU KNOW?

Teens are doing irreparable damage to their tooth enamel with the number of soft drink and energy drinks they consume; especially because of the length of time they spend slowly sipping these high acid drinks.



WHAT YOU CAN DO:

ACID ATTACK!

Some foods and beverages are high in acid – acid that is strong enough to wear away tooth enamel. Every time you consume these foods, enamel becomes softer for a short time. Saliva will slowly neutralize the acid and help re-mineralize teeth. If these attacks happen too often, the teeth do not have a chance for repair and enamel is slowly lost from the tooth surface.

What foods are high enough in acid to damage teeth?

Carbonated soft drinks (even diet drinks) are the number one culprit. Fruit drinks, energy drinks, fruit & fruit juice (e.g.: apple, orange) are also high in acid.

- Eat high acid foods at meal time when saliva flow is high.
- Consume beverages quickly without swishing them around the mouth.
- Limit consumption of soft drinks.
- Chew sugar free gum sweetened with *Xylitol* to help neutralize acid and increase saliva flow.
- Eat cheese or drink milk to neutralize the acid in the food.

SALIVA to the Rescue!

Saliva is our natural defense against tooth decay. It helps to neutralize the acid produced by plaque and "re-mineralizes" teeth. Saliva flow is highest during meal times, low between meals and almost zero when we sleep.

Avoid EARLY CHILDHOOD Tooth Decay

Early childhood tooth decay in infants and toddlers is the tragic result of babies sleeping with bottles in their mouths or toddlers drinking from sippy cups for a long time.

INFANTS

Do not put your infant or toddler to bed with a bottle of formula, milk, juice or other liquid. Sweet liquid bathes the teeth and gums and causes tooth decay. This happens even if a baby's teeth have not yet grown through the gums. In addition to tooth decay, sleeping with a bottle may pose a choking risk for infants.



TODDLERS

Have children drink beverages with meals or snacks instead of sipping small mouthfuls throughout the day. If your child wants a sippy cup for a longer time, fill it with water instead.

CHEESE puts the bite on cavities!

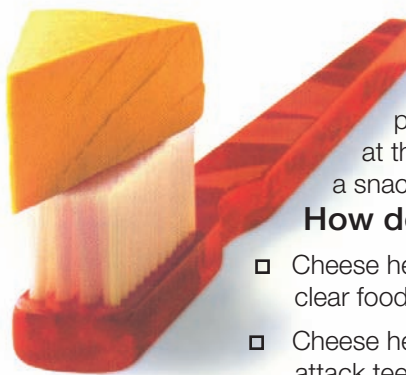


Photo courtesy of Dairy Farmers of Canada

Cheeses like aged cheddar, swiss and mozzarella can help prevent cavities when eaten alone, at the end of a meal or as part of a snack.

How does cheese protect teeth?

- Cheese helps to stimulate saliva flow and clear food particles from the teeth.
- Cheese helps neutralize the acids that attack teeth.
- Cheese reduces de-mineralization of teeth as well as promoting re-mineralization of tooth enamel.