

# "No snacking between meals!"

Maybe you've heard this before, but the truth is that snacks can be perfectly healthy for kids. What's not healthy is snacking so much that you're never hungry at mealtimes. But the right snack at the right time is often just what a kid needs.

Kids need to refuel their bodies more than the three times a day when they eat breakfast, lunch, and dinner, especially when they're really active. Walking, playing games in gym class, carrying your [backpack](#) — it all takes energy. Kids also have small stomachs, so they may need to eat more often than adults.

If kids don't get regular meals and snacks, they may get tired and grouchy. Have you ever felt this way? If it's close to mealtime you might want to hold off, but a good snacking guideline is to have one or two snacks a day.

Of course, you don't **have** to have your snack. Schedule regular snacktimes and only eat if you're hungry. And don't eat just because you're bored, watching TV, or to reward yourself for finishing your homework.

## In the Mood for Food

You gobbled your cereal at breakfast and felt full when you went to school. But now, after working on your art project, running around in gym class, and reading out loud, you're ready to eat again! That's because your body has used up the energy from your cereal. Luckily, lots of kids get a mid-morning snack.

What should you eat? Some great choices include fruit, nuts, yogurt, cut-up veggies, popcorn, peanut butter crackers, cheese, or a piece of whole-grain bread. Bring something you like to eat, but try to avoid high-sugar, high-fat treats that won't keep you satisfied very long.

A morning snack is just one of the opportunities kids get to refuel. After school is another great time to grab a snack. Many kids also have a little something before bedtime.

## The Facts on Healthy Snacks

Do you think snacking means crunching chips, munching marshmallows, or chowing down on cookies? Lots of people think snacks mean foods that aren't nutritious. But snacks can be healthy, too. And healthy snacks are more likely to give you the energy and the nutrients you need.

An orange will give you quick energy now **and** [vitamin C](#) for later. A pile of potato chips, on the other hand, contains lots of calories and fat, something that most kids don't need a lot of. Some foods, such as whole-grain foods, also will help you feel more full for longer. So a whole-grain muffin will stick with you longer than a candy bar. It's also easy to overeat candy or chips and they contain a lot of [calories](#).

That's not to say you can't have a candy bar or chips once in a while, if you like them. But try to make your regular snacks more nutritious. If you're feeling mildly hungry, maybe a piece of fruit will do the trick. But if you're feeling hungry at snacktime, and dinner is still a long way off, try a pita stuffed with veggies, cereal with milk, oatmeal, or an English muffin pizza.

