



Healthy Snacks

Children need snacks to keep their busy bodies and minds going. Not only do snacks provide energy for growing bodies, but they present an excellent opportunity for children to consume healthy foods to meet their “Energy In” goals, and get all the vital nutrients for growth and learning!

See below for examples of healthy snack ideas:

Healthy Snack Ideas

Low-Fat/Fat-Free Yogurt (4 ounces)
Orange (1 medium)
Water

Alphabet-Shaped Pretzels (1 package)
100% Orange Juice (¾ cup)

Vanilla Wafers (6 to 10 wafers)
Low-Fat/Fat-Free Chocolate Milk (1 cup)

Low-Fat/Fat-Free Chocolate Milk (1 cup)
Bagel (.9 ounces) with Peanut Butter (1 ounce)

Graham Crackers (3 count)
Low-Fat/Fat-Free Milk (1 cup)

Low-Fat/Fat-Free Yogurt (4 ounces)
100% Orange Juice (¾ cup)

½ Peanut Butter Sandwich
100% Apple Juice (¾ cup)

Low-Fat/Fat-Free Mozzarella String Cheese (1 ounce)
100% Fruit Juice (¾ cup)

Mini Oatmeal Cookies (1 package)
100% Blended Strawberry Low-Fat/Fat-Free Yogurt (4 ounces)

Low-Fat/Fat-Free Chocolate Milk (1 cup)
Mixed Fruit in Light Syrup (¾ cup)

Banana (1)
Cheese & Peanut Butter Crackers (1 pack)
Water

Tiny Twist Pretzels (1 serving)
Low-Fat/Fat-Free Milk (1 cup)

Red Delicious Apple (1)
Teddy Grahams (1 package)
Low-Fat/Fat-Free Milk (1 cup)

Whole Wheat Crackers (8 crackers)
Carrots/Fresh Green Beans (¾ cup)
Low-Fat Dip for Vegetables
Water



Granola Bar (1 serving)
100% Fruit Juice (¾ cup)

Apple Slices (1 apple)
Caramel Dip (1-oz. package)
Low-Fat/Fat-Free Milk (1 cup)

Cheese Crackers (4 count)
Low-Fat/Fat-Free Milk (1 cup)

Low-Fat/Fat-Free Milk (1 cup)
Carrot Sticks/Pepper Strips (¾ cup)
Low-Fat Ranch Dressing (2 tablespoons)

Muffin (1 small)
Cantaloupe and Grapes (¾ cup)
Dip for Fruit

Soft Pretzel (1 serving)
Low-Fat/Fat-Free String Cheese (1 ounce)
Water

Grilled Ham and Cheese Sandwich (1 slice of bread, 1 ounce low-fat/fat-free cheese, 1 ounce ham)
Water

Blueberry Muffin (1 serving)
Low-Fat/Fat-Free Chocolate Milk (1 cup)

Baby Carrots (1.6-ounce bag)
Vanilla Wafers (6 to 10 wafers)
Low-Fat/Fat-Free Milk (1 cup)

Low-Fat/Fat-Free Chocolate Milk (1 cup)
Banana (1 medium)

Ham Sandwich (1 ounce ham, 1 slice bread)
100% Orange Juice (¾ cup)



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Healthy After-school Snack Guide

Why provide a nutritious snack? Did you know your after-school program could be eligible for reimbursement?

By the time children arrive at your after-school program, the lunch they ate at school is a distant memory. Their growing bodies and curious minds need nutritious food between lunch and dinner to get through the afternoon and to thrive. A healthy snack becomes even more important when students are participating in a physically active after-school program like **ReCharge!**. Without a healthy snack, children may feel tired, their attention spans shorten, their ability to learn diminishes, and they may have difficulty fully participating in physical activity and learning.

A nutritious snack also helps improve the overall quality of the program by:

- Reinforcing the nutrition education messages in **ReCharge!** by putting them into practice.
- Attracting children to the program, especially older children who often have a say in whether or not they attend.
- Allowing the program to leverage federal dollars available from the child nutrition programs, contributing to the after-school program's financial sustainability.

The child nutrition programs — the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) and the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) — provide funding to feed children who participate in after-school programs. Below is information on how you can access these crucial programs.

How do the federal child nutrition programs work?

The National School Lunch Program provides funding for after-school snacks. To qualify for NSLP funds, the after-school program must be school-sponsored, but the program can be operated either by a school or by another organization, such as a Police Athletic League, and can take place on school grounds or elsewhere.

Schools are reimbursed for providing snacks in one of two ways.

- If the program is located in a low-income area — where 50 percent or more of the elementary, middle or high school students qualify for free or reduced-price school meals — then the school receives the highest rate of reimbursement, called the “free rate,” for all of the snacks it serves to all children. Tens of thousands of schools meet this test.
- If the program is not in a low-income area, then the school receives reimbursement in a three-tiered system (“free,” “reduced-price” or “paid”) based upon each participant's school meal application.

(For the current rates, visit www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Governance/notices/naps/NAPs08-09.pdf or www.frac.org/pdf/rates.PDF. The reimbursement rates are adjusted annually for inflation.)

Snacks must meet the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) nutritional guidelines. They must include two of four possible components:

- Low-fat or fat-free milk
- Fruits or vegetables (including juice)
- Meat or meat alternatives (e.g., peanut butter, or low-fat/fat-free cheese or yogurt)
- Bread or bread alternatives (e.g., cereal or pasta)

For measurement requirements and additional information on the nutritional guidelines, visit www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Afterschool/factsheet.htm or http://www.frac.org/afterschool/pdf/fact_nutrguide.pdf.

The school nutrition department is responsible for operating the NSLP. The federal funds flow through the state to the school district to pay for the snacks. The school nutrition department must ensure that the snacks meet the federal nutritional guidelines for the program and that the proper paperwork is kept. At most schools, the after-school program is responsible for serving the snacks, keeping an attendance roster and taking meal counts for reimbursement.

The logistics of the snack program will in large part be determined by the school's resources. The common design is for the cafeteria staff to put together the snacks and store them in a designated area. Perishable items are often stored in coolers. (You can work with the school nutrition department to raise funds for coolers or receive them as in-kind donations from local civic organizations, grocers, or children's health and hunger agencies.) The after-school program picks up the snacks, serves them to the students in the cafeteria or another designated area, fills out the paperwork, and cleans up the area afterwards. Leftover snacks often can be restored as long as the food is kept at the proper temperature.

While most school-sponsored after-school programs participate through the NSLP, federal payments for suppers as well as snacks are available through the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Providing a supper is a great way to ensure that children are receiving enough nutrition to get through the afternoon and to support working families.

Schools, local government agencies and private nonprofit organizations are eligible for the CACFP. The school nutrition department, another public agency, the actual after-school program or an operator of multiple after-school programs can take on the responsibility for sponsoring the CACFP. For additional information on the CACFP, visit www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/Care/CACFP/snacks.htm or http://www.frac.org/Afterschool_Guide.pdf.

*Some after-school programs choose to have students bring in their own snacks. This may not be the best policy because children often forget to bring their snacks or bring unhealthy snacks. At a time of growing concern about childhood nutrition and obesity, this is an issue. Another worry is food safety and whether the snack is kept at the right temperature. And in programs serving low-income children, there is the additional concern that a child may be unable to supply his or her own snack. If a program does choose to have students bring their own snacks, it is still important for the after-school program to use the snacks to reinforce the healthy nutrition messages in **ReCharge!** The after-school program can provide parents a list of healthy snack options, such as the list on page 1 of this section, and can discourage parents from sending soda, candy and chips. A useful resource for developing a healthy snack policy is available at www.ActionForHealthyKids.org.*

How do I participate in the federal child nutrition programs?

The easiest way to fund snacks through the NSLP or suppers and snacks through the CACFP is through the school nutrition department.

Ask the school nutrition director to provide the snacks. School nutrition directors may not know the program is available, may be unaware of how helpful it would be for them to provide the food, or may not know about your after-school program. Make your case:

- The school nutrition department is the expert on nutrition programs — a contract is in place with the state child nutrition agency to provide federally funded food; they are professionals who understand how the child nutrition programs work; and they likely have the food, staff, capacity to produce the snacks, and the storage space. The school nutrition department could provide snacks through the NSLP with little additional work.
- It would help the school nutrition department to further support learning and improve student health and wellness.
- It would be a tremendous help to your program, which is willing to work with the school nutrition department, to make the snack program operate effectively.

If the school nutrition director is unwilling to provide the snacks, then work with allies to encourage him or her. Since the success of the snack program will depend upon the commitment of the director, you may want to recruit those who have a positive working relationship with him or her to encourage sponsorship and support of the snack program. Potential allies may include school principals, cafeteria staff and school administrators.

If these efforts are unsuccessful, there is always the possibility of providing food yourself by sponsoring the Child and Adult Care Food Program. Since the after-school program is then responsible for operating the CACFP, you might consider joining other programs.

How do I ensure the snack program is a success?

Once the snack program is up and running, you want to ensure the program offers children a nutritious snack they enjoy.

Develop a strong partnership with the school nutrition director. Since the school nutrition department most likely is sponsoring the program, it is responsible for developing the menus. However, you can impact the snacks that are served. In every relationship, communication is the key to success. Start a dialogue with the director about the types of snacks the children enjoy. Most school nutrition directors are interested in working with after-school programs to ensure the children are receiving a nutritious snack they will eat, especially with the growing focus on child health and wellness.

- **Make suggestions to the director on how you can work together.** You could suggest developing a snack planning committee, which includes the school nutrition department, students in the program, parents and after-school staff. Hold monthly or quarterly meetings with your staff and the school nutrition staff to discuss how the snack program is running. Consider allowing a substitution for snacks that are unpopular with the students.

Join your school district's Wellness Policy Planning Committee. Since the first day of the 2006–07 school year, all school districts that participated in the NSLP were required to develop a wellness policy, which included guidelines for all foods available in the school. The development of local school wellness policies must involve parents, students, school nutrition staff, the school board, school administrators and the public. This is an opportunity for after-school programs to ensure a positive policy is developed for snacks, suppers if they are served, nutrition education and physical activity. The **ReCharge!** program and the healthy snacks you serve can support your district's wellness policies and practices. Additional information on school wellness policies is available at www.ActionForHealthyKids.org, http://www.frac.org/pdf/wellness_guide2006.pdf and www.fns.usda.gov/tn/Healthy/wellnesspolicy.html.

Recruit partners in the community. Because of the concern about rising rates of childhood obesity, many communities have local groups or coalitions focused on improving children's nutrition and health. An important ally to consider in your efforts to ensure the quality of your school's snacks is the state's Action for Healthy Kids Team. Active in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, these teams take action to improve children's health and well-being, often by focusing on improving the quality of the food offered at schools.

For a list of state teams and to contact leaders in your area, visit www.ActionForHealthyKids.org/state.php.

Design your own menus within the USDA nutritional requirements. An after-school program can choose to sponsor the CACFP independently. However, the after-school program becomes responsible for administering documentation as well as developing the menus. Consider these trade-offs when evaluating this option.

Even though any district participating in the NSLP can provide snacks, some school-based after-school programs may choose not to participate in the NSLP. Schools usually make this decision because few children in the program are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals or because the school district does not want to administer the program. These programs should still consider providing a nutritious snack using after-school program funds or doing additional fundraising to cover the snack costs. The school nutrition department could vend the snack, the after-school program could try to maximize dollars by purchasing the snack at a local discount retailer, or if the after-school program serves low-income children, it may be feasible to partner with a local food bank to provide the snack.

Healthy After-school Snacks Additional Web-based Resources

Funding Resources:

- **Food Research and Action Center (FRAC):** a national anti-hunger organization that provides technical assistance about the funding available through the federal nutrition programs (www.frac.org)
- **Afterschool.gov:** a website maintained by the federal government that outlines federal funding for after-school programs (www.afterschool.gov)
- **Afterschool Alliance:** a national organization dedicated to raising awareness of the importance of after-school programs and advocating for quality, affordable programs for all children (<http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/fundingData.cfm>)
- **21st Century Community Learning Center grants:** one of the largest federal sources for after-school programs (www.ed.gov/programs/21stcclc/index.html)
- **The Finance Project:** a nonprofit organization that provides technical assistance to after-school programs for developing financial sustainability (www.financeprojectinfo.org/OST/)

Nutrition Program Resources:

- **USDA's Team Nutrition:** an initiative to support child nutrition programs through training and technical assistance for food service, nutrition education for children and their caregivers, and school and community support for healthy eating and physical activity (www.fns.usda.gov/tn/)
- **FRAC Afterschool Guide:** technical assistance and quick guide for the federal nutrition programs from a national anti-hunger organization (www.frac.org/Afterschool_Guide.pdf)

Healthy Snack Resources:

- **USDA:** cycle snack menus for both traditional and limited kitchen facilities (www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/menu/cyclemenu.htm)
- **Nutrition Explorations:** "Snack Smart" ideas for parents (www.nutritionexplorations.org/parents/snack-smart.asp)

