

Choosing and Preparing Healthy Snacks

This presentation utilizes materials from the Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children.

Agent: Children's snacks should fit into the bottom 3 levels of the Food Guide Pyramid. (*Direct audiences' attention to visual*). The Food Guide Pyramid shows how we can make healthy snack choices following the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

Each of the food groups provide some, but not all, of the nutrients our children need daily. No one-food group is more important than the other, with the exception of the tip, which we need to help our children to learn to consume only in moderation due to the high calorie content and minimal vitamin and minerals available.

Discussion: *Have audience suggest snack ideas from all the food groups on the Food Guide Pyramid. Discuss. Mention those foods that may cause choking in children and how they can be offered; if we can change the way they are presented.*

Agent: Children's snacks should be designed to complement their daily nutrient intake. (Can anyone tell me why we offer snacks to our children?) *Discuss why, as well as the importance of child size servings.*

Agent: Our snacks should be planned according to the Food Guide Pyramid. Stock up on simple foods that kids love such as peanut butter; cheese spread or slices; miniature bagels; fresh vegetables and fruits; non-sugar coated ready to eat cereals; and low sugar cookies, such as ginger snaps, and fig bars.

Agent: If we involve our children in the preparation of snacks, chances are they might be more willing to try those foods that they haven't been interested in before. Children as young as two can assist you in snack preparation. (*Refer participants to the handout, "Helping Children Prepare Healthy Snacks and discuss."*)

Agent: By introducing children to healthy snacks now, you are helping to provide a solid foundation of healthy nutrition for later life.

Agent: We have stations set up around the room with healthy snacks you and the children in your care can prepare. At the station you will find all the ingredients you will need, as well as, utensils, and directions. Please visit all the stations, enjoy your snack and we will discuss the snacks at the end of the preparation time.

Discussion: *Ask open-ended questions concerning the snacks prepared. Did they like them? Why or why not? Would their children like them? Can their children help make them? Etc.*