



# Healthy Back-to-School Snack Guide

BALANCED  
SNACKS TO SET  
YOUR KIDS (AND  
YOU) UP FOR  
SUCCESS



# HEALTHY SNACKS FOR KIDS

*Why it matters*

Back-to-school season is here! And between new supplies, schedules, and packing lunches...the to-do list is endless. One thing that's often overlooked? Snacks.

The right snacks can keep kids energized, focused, and feeling their best throughout the day. This guide offers loads of healthy snack ideas to help keep your kids fueled.



## The 3 Basics of Healthy Snacks

1. **Balanced energy** - Balanced snacks have a mix of protein, fiber, and healthy fats. This combo helps keep blood sugar steady and prevents those dreaded energy crashes.
2. **Nutrient-dense** - Processed snacks may be convenient, but they're low on nutrition. Instead, focus on wholesome, real foods like fruits, veggies, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and clean proteins. Whole foods provide vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants that support growth, immunity, and brain function - all key for back to school!
3. **Gut-friendly** - Gut health influences *so much* of your child's health, including digestion, immune health, and even mood. In fact, between 70-80% of the immune system lives in your gut! And 95% of the mood-boosting neurotransmitter serotonin is made in the gut. Gut-friendly snacks are a simple way to keep kids healthy and happy.



# ESSENTIAL NUTRIENTS

*For school success*

The best back-to-school snacks keep kid's blood sugar balanced and their brain and body fueled. That means a combo of three essential nutrients: protein, healthy fats, and fiber.



## Protein

- Vital for growth and development - acts as building blocks for muscles, skin, organs, and blood
- Provides a sustained energy source to fuel kids throughout the day
- Needed to produce antibodies that fight off infections
- Good sources: eggs, turkey, hummus, cheese



## Healthy Fats

- Crucial for growth and brain development
- Helps the body absorb fat-soluble vitamins (vitamin A, D, E & K)
- Make snacks more satisfying and filling, helping kids stay full longer
- Good sources: avocado, nuts, seeds, nut butter



## Fiber

- Slows digestion, lowers blood sugar, & keeps energy steady
- Feeds beneficial gut bacteria to keep the gut happy
- Keeps the digestive tract moving and prevents constipation
- Many high-fiber foods are packed with vitamins and minerals that promote overall health
- Good sources: fruits, veggies, whole grains, legumes



# QUICK SNACK IDEAS

*Simple & prep-ahead*



## Simple Snacks

Short on time? Here are some quick, healthy options that are easy to throw together:

- Apple slices with almond butter
- Greek yogurt & berries
- Cheese cubes & crackers
- Turkey avocado wrap
- Edamame & grapes
- Guacamole with tortilla chips
- String cheese & mandarin
- Trail mix



## Prep-Ahead Snacks

A little prep can be a huge timesaver on busy mornings. Here are some make-ahead options to consider prepping for the week:

- Energy balls
- Hard-boiled eggs
- Veggie sticks with hummus
- Almond butter banana quesadilla
- Mini muffins
- Egg muffins
- Tuna salad with crackers
- Overnight oats with berries
- Homemade granola bars



# HYDRATION FOR KIDS

## *Why it matters*

Healthy snacks aren't the only thing kids need to stay fueled. Hydration matters too! About 60% of the body and 75% of the brain is made up of water. That's why staying hydrated is a must for overall health and brain function.

## Why Hydration is Key

Estimates suggest that roughly half of school-aged children are underhydrated. This is unfortunate, as hydration can help kids and teens in the classroom and on the field. Staying hydrated can help:

- Increase cognitive function
- Improve memory
- Support digestion
- Maintain energy levels
- Keep immune system strong



## Hydration Tips for Kids

- **Keep a water bottle handy.** Send your kids to school with a reusable water bottle and encourage them to sip throughout the day.
- **Pack hydrating foods for snacks.** About 20% of daily water intake comes from food. Try including water-rich foods in your kids' snacks. Watermelon, cantaloupe, cherry tomatoes, strawberries, grapes, cucumbers, and carrots are all hydrating options.
- **Jazz up water.** If your kids find water boring, try infusing it with fresh fruit or herbs. Berries, lemon, cucumber slices, or fresh mint can all add a burst of flavor.
- **Stick to clean hydration options.** Pass on sugary options like sports drinks and juices. Instead, opt for clean hydration drinks like water, coconut water, or herbal teas. Cold brewed peppermint tea is a kid-friendly fave.



# GUT-FRIENDLY SNACKS

*For kids*

A healthy gut means happy, healthy kids. Here are some gut-friendly foods to consider adding to your kid's snack rotation:

## Probiotic Foods

Fermented foods are rich in probiotics, which are live strains of beneficial bacteria. Eating probiotic foods can help keep the gut microbiome in balance.

Probiotic-rich snack ideas include **plain Greek yogurt, kefir, cottage cheese, and pickles** (check the refrigerated section). Look for "live active cultures" on the label.



## Prebiotic Foods

Just as your kids need fuel, so does their gut microbiome. Enter prebiotics - a special type of fiber that feeds your gut bacteria.

Kid-friendly foods that are rich in prebiotics include **apples (unpeeled), bananas, oats, legumes, cocoa powder, & flaxseed** (sneak in oatmeal or energy balls).



## Polyphenols

Polyphenols are antioxidant compounds found in many plant foods. And they're shown to help regulate the gut microbiome and help the "good guys" thrive.

Polyphenol-rich foods include **berries, cherries, apples, olives, cocoa powder, edamame & nuts.**



# SNACK PAIRINGS

*To stay satisfied*

While kids love processed snacks like chips, crackers, and cookies, these foods are devoid of nutrients. Not to mention they can spike blood sugar levels and lead to energy crashes - not ideal for a long day of learning.

Luckily, creating balanced snacks for kids isn't hard at all. All it takes is this formula:

**Protein**

+

**Fiber**

+

**Healthy Fats**

Pretty simple, right? Pairing snacks with protein, fiber, and healthy fats sustains energy levels and helps kids feel full longer.

In a perfect world, every snack would have a combo of all three. But life is hectic - so if some snacks only check two boxes, that's okay! Just pair snacks as best you can. Here are some mix & match ideas to make this as easy as possible:

| Protein                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Fiber                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Healthy Fats                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Turkey deli meat</li><li>• Hard-boiled eggs</li><li>• Cheese cubes</li><li>• String cheese</li><li>• Greek yogurt</li><li>• Cottage cheese</li><li>• Tuna salad</li><li>• Jerky</li><li>• Nuts</li><li>• Nut butter</li><li>• Hummus</li><li>• Edamame</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Snap peas</li><li>• Baby carrots</li><li>• Celery sticks</li><li>• Cherry tomatoes</li><li>• Red pepper slices</li><li>• Berries</li><li>• Apple slices</li><li>• Bananas</li><li>• Oranges</li><li>• Grapes</li><li>• Melon cubes</li><li>• Oats</li><li>• Whole grain crackers</li><li>• Popcorn</li></ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Avocado</li><li>• Olives</li><li>• Coconut flakes</li><li>• Nut butter</li><li>• Almonds</li><li>• Cashews</li><li>• Pistachios</li><li>• Pumpkin seeds</li><li>• Sunflower seeds</li><li>• Chia seeds</li><li>• Ground flaxseed<br/>(add to yogurt or<br/>oats)</li></ul> |



# STORE BOUGHT SNACKS

*Healthier options*

While whole foods snacks are ideal, having packaged snacks on hand can be a lifesaver when you're short on time. Be choosy and opt for healthier versions that are free of artificial ingredients. Organic options are best, so look for the USDA label. Here's a round-up of some healthier options to consider adding to your stash:



LARABARS &  
LARABAR KIDS



CHOMPS  
MEAT STICKS



PALEO  
VALLEY  
MEAT STICKS



LESSER  
EVIL  
POPCORN



LESSER EVIL  
PALEO  
PUFFS



SOLEY  
FRUIT JERKY



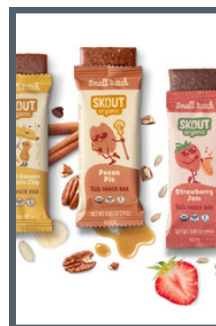
SIETE  
CHIPS



SIETE  
PUFF SNACKS



SIMPLE  
MILLS  
CRACKERS



SKOUT KIDS  
SNACK BARS



JACKSON'S  
SWEET  
POTATO  
CHIPS



SEASNAX  
SEAWEED  
SNACKS



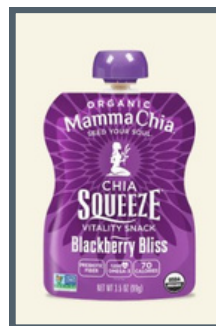
GOGO  
SQUEEZ  
ORGANIC  
APPLESAUCE  
POUCHES



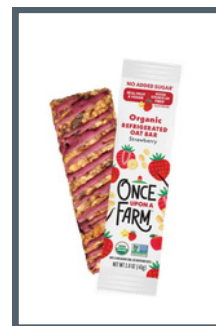
ORGANIC  
VALLEY  
STRINGLES



THAT'S IT FRUIT  
BARS



MAMA MIA  
CHIA  
SQUEEZE



ONCE UPON A  
FARM OAT  
BARS



BIENA  
CHICKPEA  
SNACKS





# BACK-TO-SCHOOL SNACK

## *Action checklist*

Here's a handy cheat sheet of next steps for smart snacking:



**Keep snacks balanced.** When packing snacks, aim for a mix of protein, fiber, and healthy fats. This trio helps balance blood sugar to keep energy levels steady.



**Prep-ahead for the week.** Set aside time for weekly snack prep to make mornings go smoother. Chop some veggie sticks, hard-boil some eggs, or whip up a batch of energy balls or granola bars (see recipes on page 10 for ideas).



**Keep a water bottle handy.** Send your child to school with a reusable water bottle and encourage them to drink up. Consider infusing water with fruit, cucumber slices, or herbs to make hydration more fun.



**Gut-friendly snacks.** When planning snacks, choose gut-friendly foods with probiotics, prebiotics, or polyphenols. Think yogurt, berries, and oats. This will support your kiddo's gut health, as well as their mood and immune system!



**Build an emergency stash.** Having healthy grab-and-go options can be a game-changer on busy days. Keep a stash of healthier store-bought snacks so you're never caught empty-handed.



# SIMPLE MAKE-AHEAD SNACKS

*Two recipes*



## Chocolate Energy Balls

*\*Recipe makes about eight balls*

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup (90 g) gluten free rolled oats
- ¼ cup (60 g) almond butter
- 1 medium banana, mashed
- 1 tbsp (12 g) ground flaxseed
- 2 tbsp (24 g) cocoa powder

### Directions:

1. Add all ingredients to a large mixing bowl. Using your hands, blend the ingredients together well.
2. Form about 8 balls out of the mixture.
3. Store in the refrigerator for 2-3 days, or freeze for up to three months.



## Healthy Granola Bars

*\*Recipe makes about six bars*

### Ingredients:

- 1 cup (90 g) gluten-free rolled oats
- ¾ cup (180 g) almond butter
- 3 tbsp (63 g) honey
- 1½ scoops (30 g) collagen peptides
- 1 tbsp (15 g) water
- 1 tbsp (14 g) chia seeds
- 1 tbsp (6 g) unsweetened shredded coconut
- Optional: ½ cup of mix-ins like raisins, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, chocolate chips, dried cranberries, etc.

### Directions:

1. In a large bowl, combine the almond butter and honey.
2. In a small bowl, combine the collagen peptides and water and stir until a thick paste is formed.
3. Add the collagen to the almond butter and honey mixture and stir until combined.
4. Stir in the rolled oats, chia seeds, coconut flakes, and mix-ins (if using) until the batter is evenly combined.
5. Spread the batter evenly in an 8x8 baking dish lined with parchment paper.
6. Place the bars in the freezer to set for 1-2 hours.
7. Remove the bars from the freezer and slice into six even portions. Store in the refrigerator for up to a week. Serve cold and enjoy!

