

## Snack Time

**O**rganic Valley string cheese and Kashi TLC 7-grain crackers are my go-to snack for my 2-year-old daughter. She loves her “cheese and crackers” snack but I give it to her almost every day and, frankly, she’s ready for a more varied snack menu. As kids go back to school and we get back to our usual non-summer routines, it would be nice to have some new snack ideas to put into our rotations. Here are the five Ws (who, what, where, when and why) of snacking, along with my freshest ideas for healthful, convenient snacks that your whole family can enjoy.

### When?

Snack time should occur up to twice a day, ideally halfway between breakfast and lunch and/or again halfway between lunch and dinner. I’m not a proponent of snacking after dinner because it is too close to bedtime and I’ve noticed that a lot of mindless munching goes on at this time. Closing the kitchen after dinner is a healthy habit that is helpful for weight control, too.

For young children, nap schedules can influence whether there is any snack at all. When it comes to kids, you need to consider their sleeping and activity schedules when planning their meal and snack times and make sure that snacks are spaced two to three hours after and before meals so that they will come to the table hungry. Structured snacks and meals are especially important for children. Do not allow grazing or panhandling for food outside of scheduled meals and snacks, or else meals will be poor (though you should always make water available).

However, it is not mandatory to eat if you’re not hungry. I often skip either my morning



### Stand-Alone Snacks (perfectly balanced)

Homemade Granola Bars\*

Unsalted dry roasted or raw nuts, *Blue Diamond* almonds natural 100-calorie packs, *Flanigan Farms* nuts\*\*

*Jo San* soy nuts or *Seapoint Farms* dry roasted edamame\*\*

White Bean Dip with Crudités \*

Edamame

*Mrs. May's Naturals* nut crunches\*\*

*Flanigan Farms* trail mix\*\*

Spinach and Cheese Mini Quiches\*

*Health Valley* or *Amy's* organic low sodium lentil or minestrone soups

*Fage Total* 2% plain Greek yogurt

\*See recipe. \*\*Nuts are a choking hazard for young children.

or afternoon snack, depending on how I feel and how soon my next meal will be. Children also have the right to decide not to eat, so don’t force them to eat snacks or meals if they are not hungry. Their job is to decide *whether* and *how much* to eat and it is the parent or caregiver’s job to decide the *what*, *when* and *where* of meals and snacks.

### Who?

Snacking is for everyone, but it is especially important for children and older adults because it supplements calories and nutrients that may not have been eaten at regular meals. Children often can’t eat enough to meet their nutritional needs at meals because their tummies don’t hold a lot of food, and older adults do not always eat three meals a day for reasons such as illness, disability, a tight budget, or flagging energy levels that prevent them from preparing food. Small, simple snacks can be a boon for both of these populations.

Snacks are also good for people who are prone to hypoglycemia (low blood sugar), are trying to lose weight, are active or have diabetes. People with poor appetites can use snacks to supplement nutrients and calories that are lost at mealtimes. There is evidence that well-balanced snacks are great for helping to control appetite and blood sugar levels. Controlling your appetite with the right snacks can help you eat less at subsequent meals, which may in turn lead to weight loss.

### Why?

Aside from supplementing important nutrients and controlling blood sugar, snacks can help give you an energy boost, especially if they include some combination of carbohydrates, fat and protein. They also help tame the hunger that can develop in



Gelson's Registered Dietitian, Jessica Siegel, has a Masters in Public Health. However, she is not a doctor and her nutritional recommendations are not tailored to specific health problems. Consult your physician before beginning any nutritional program. To contact Jessica, please call her at 1-800-GELSONS.

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## Foods to Combine for Balanced Snacks

(choose one from each column)

Carbohydrates	Proteins/Fats
Any vegetables, especially cherry tomatoes, carrots, sugar snap peas, radishes, red and yellow bell pepper slices, cucumber, zucchini, jicama, celery, broccoli	Flanigan Farms raw nuts, Blue Diamond natural almonds, Jo San soy nuts or Seapoint Farms dry roasted edamame**
Any fruit	Yogurt, like Straus Family Creamery organic, Horizon Organic, Fage Total plain Greek, or Oikos organic plain or vanilla Greek
Food for Life sprouted whole-grain breads	Organic milk
Kale Chips (see recipe card)	Homemade bean dip, Gelson's Finest hummus or Tribe organic hummus
Guiltless Gourmet baked corn tortilla chips	Canned beans, like Natural Directions organic, Westbrae organic, Sun Vista no salt added
Whole-wheat pasta	West Soy organic unsweetened vanilla or plain soy milk
Kashi TLC 7 whole grain and sesame, Wasa or Ak-Mak crackers	Applegate Farms sliced turkey
Newman's Own organic spelt pretzels	Gelson's Finest organic omega-3 eggs, hardboiled
Manischewitz or Streit's whole-wheat matzos	Maisie Jane's almond butter or Laura Scudder's peanut butter
Food for Life Ezekiel sprouted grain tortillas	Friendship no salt added cottage cheese
Kashi Autumn Wheat, Island Vanilla, Cinnamon Harvest, Heart to Heart, U cereal or General Mills Cheerios	Cheese, like organic string cheese, part skim mozzarella, Organic Valley Jack, Munster or cheddar, Boar's Head Lacey Swiss, or Horizon Organic sliced provolone or cheddar
Unsweetened oatmeal or muesli	Edamame
Bear Naked Fit vanilla almond or La Brea Bakery granola or Gelson's Finest granola squares	Early California or Lindsay black olives (rinsed)
Babylon Bakery whole-wheat lavash wraps	Quick Guacamole* or avocado
Rudi's Organic whole-grain wheat English muffins	Napa Valley, Bragg, Colavita, Lucini or Newman's Own organic extra virgin first cold pressed olive oils

\*See recipe. \*\* Nuts are a choking hazard for young children.

the long hours between meals. Snacking can be healthful for everyone if it is done with some planning. Be sure to pack snacks when you or your children leave the house in the morning. Otherwise, unplanned haphazard snacking can get you into nutritional and caloric trouble.

### Where?

Ideally, we will all sit down at a table to eat our snacks and not eat them while driving in the car, sitting in front of the TV or computer or riding in a stroller. It is important that you pay attention to your food at meals and snacks, so that you can be connected to the amount you are eating and the flavors of the food. Respecting your food and avoiding distractions is crucial for savoring the food and staying in touch with your feelings of hunger and satiety so that you do not overeat.

### What (and How)?

Snacks can be small individual items, such as a handful of nuts, or they can be mini meals, like veggie quesadillas. I prefer that they be mostly vegetarian, since we tend to rely too much on animal proteins at meals already. They should contain between 60 and 200 calories, but they ought not to be empty calories. Think of snacks as opportunities to boost your nutrient intake instead of opportunities to indulge cravings.

Eating well takes planning and strategizing, especially when you are preparing meals and snacks for children. Kids do not need

## Miscellaneous Condiments

(a little bit goes a long way)

Casa Sanchez organic or Gelson's Finest fresh salsa

Bragg organic vinaigrettes, Follow your Heart ranch or Galeo's miso salad dressings

Mario Battali tomato basil pasta sauce

Rigoni di Asiago Fior di Frutta organic fruit spread

Friendship Farmer's cheese (instead of cream cheese)

Imported grated Reggiano Parmesan cheese

Bone Suckin' BBQ sauce

Follow Your Heart veganise

Natural Directions organic or French's yellow mustard

## QUICK GUACAMOLE

Serves: 4

### Ingredients:

1 ripe avocado, mashed  
¼ cup *Gelson's Finest* hot salsa  
⅛ teaspoon *Le Saunier de Camargne*  
Fleur de Sel

### Directions:

Combine all ingredients in a small bowl. Serve with baked tortilla chips or veggie sticks.

special foods, but they do have certain taste preferences for sweet foods and possible aversions to bitter foods, like vegetables. We parents and caregivers need to help them become competent eaters who can enjoy a variety of foods, and snack time can be a great opportunity to boost eating competence. There has been a lot of research in this area and many studies have confirmed that children need repeated exposure to all foods, including vegetables (at least 12 exposures, but often more), before they start to accept them. Don't make a big deal about eating vegetables; offer them neutrally, like you would bread or pasta, at meals and snacks and quietly eat them yourself. Children are more likely

## HOMEMADE GRANOLA BARS

Serves: 12

### Ingredients:

- parchment paper  
1 18-ounce bag *Bob's Red Mill* muesli  
¾ cup *Westsoy* organic unsweetened  
vanilla soy milk  
1 egg white, beaten

2 tablespoons *Wholesome Sweeteners*  
organic raw blue agave nectar  
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
¼ teaspoon nutmeg  
⅛ teaspoon allspice (optional)  
⅛ teaspoon salt

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Line the bottom and sides of a 9x9 or 11x7-inch metal baking dish with parchment paper (or spray with cooking spray). Combine all the ingredients in a medium bowl, mix until moist and evenly distributed.  
2. Spread the mixture in an even, thin layer in the baking dish. Press down firmly to pack. Bake until light brown on edges, about 35–40 minutes. Cook less time for chewy bars and more time for crunchy bars. Cut into 12 bars (two parallel cuts in one direction, three parallel cuts in the other direction) while they are still hot. Allow to cool slightly and remove from dish to continue cooling. Store in individual resealable snack bags for up to three days or freeze them.

to eat their veggies when they are not pressured, when they can choose from two or more vegetables and when they see their parents and caregivers eating and enjoying them.

When it comes to sweets, treats and empty calorie snack foods, I know that most adults eat more than they should. Most children do, too. We could all use a little help when it comes to learning how to handle consuming these forbidden foods. Parents and caregivers should also keep in mind

that it is their job to teach children how to handle these foods. They are not “everyday foods,” but they are not “never foods,” either. They are “sometimes foods” to be thoroughly enjoyed once in a while without any negative feelings. I'm not going to tell you what “forbidden” foods to eat because you know what you like. The important thing is to find the right balance between depriving and over providing.

I cannot emphasize enough that snacks should not regularly consist of junk food, like refined-grain crackers (including graham crackers), puffed “veggie” snacks, gummy “fruit” bits, cheddar crackers shaped like animals, juice or soda. However, once in a while, it is perfectly fine to enjoy these types of foods for a snack, though it is best to have what you really love, not just like. Plan to have as much as you want of your favorite ice cream or cookies or chips or soft drink for a snack for yourself and your family once a week and have a portion-controlled dessert (or whatever forbidden food you like) once a week, too. That's right, don't limit the quantity of treats at snack time but do limit it at dessert, since sweets and treats won't compete with other foods at snack time but they will at a meal. This is not a scheduled binge, though it might feel like it at first. Eventually the novelty and the negative feelings give way to trust and confidence so that only the right amount is eaten.

## A Few Great Combos

**Cinna-Raisin Treat:** spread Farmer's cheese on a slice of toasted *Food for Life* cinnamon raisin bread

**Turkey on a Stick:** wrap a slice of turkey breast around a carrot or asparagus and dip in guacamole

**Cheese Roll-Ups:** place a slice of Swiss or Munster cheese on a butter lettuce leaf; roll up and dip into yellow or Dijon mustard

**Strawberry Milk:** blend fresh or frozen organic strawberries with organic milk or soymilk (works with blueberries, too)

**Mini Pizza:** spread a thin layer of tomato sauce on half of a whole-wheat English muffin and sprinkle with shredded cheddar or mozzarella cheese and toast in a toaster oven until cheese melts and muffin crisps

**Creamy Veggie Dip:** stir a little fresh salsa into plain Greek yogurt and add a little mashed avocado (optional); use as a dip for cut vegetables

**Frozen Banana Sandwiches:** Cut a peeled banana in half lengthwise and spread one cut side with peanut butter or almond butter; cover with the other half and freeze for about two hours (freezing is optional)

## WHITE BEAN DIP WITH CRUDITÉS

Serves: 12

This higher protein version of hummus will keep for several days in the refrigerator.

### Ingredients:

2 15-ounce cans <i>Carmelina</i> cannellini beans, drained and rinsed	2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon <i>Napa Valley</i> organic olive oil
8 fresh sage leaves	½ pint <i>Del Cabo</i> organic Sweet 100 cherry tomatoes, quartered
2 large cloves <i>Melissa's</i> organic garlic	2 pounds organic broccoli, broken into florets, stalks discarded
¾ teaspoon <i>Le Saunier de Camargne</i> Fleur de Sel	1 16-ounce bag organic baby carrots

### Directions:

1. Combine the beans, sage, garlic and salt in a food processor and begin to blend. Slowly drizzle in the olive oil and blend until smooth. Transfer dip to a bowl and cover with tomato pieces. Serve with broccoli and carrots.

## SPINACH & CHEESE MINI QUICHES

Serves: 16

### Ingredients:

-cooking spray	½ cup <i>Organic Valley</i> ricotta cheese
1 tablespoon <i>Napa Valley</i> organic olive oil	¾ cup <i>Tillamook</i> reduced fat cheddar cheese, grated
½ 7-ounce package <i>Gills Onions</i> fresh diced yellow onions or 1 small onion, diced	1 tablespoon <i>Grey Poupon</i> Dijon mustard
2 cloves <i>Melissa's</i> organic garlic, minced	¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
10 ounces fresh organic baby spinach, washed but not dried	¼ teaspoon salt
6 <i>Gelson's Finest</i> organic omega-3 eggs	½ teaspoon black pepper
	16 <i>Sesmark</i> brown rice crackers
	1 tablespoon grated Reggiano Parmesan cheese

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400° Fahrenheit. Lightly spray two mini muffin pans (¼-cup size) with cooking spray.

2. Heat olive oil in a large pot over medium heat. Add onion; cook until clear, about seven minutes. Add garlic; cook 30 seconds. Stir in damp spinach and cover. Cook to just wilt, about three minutes. Remove from heat and set aside.

3. Beat eggs in a bowl and stir in ricotta, cheddar cheese, mustard, nutmeg, salt and pepper.

4. Place a cracker in the bottom of 16 muffin cups. Add a generous tablespoon of vegetables to each muffin cup, squeezing out excess water first. Spoon two tablespoons egg and cheese mixture on top to fill the cups. Sprinkle tops with a pinch of parmesan cheese. Bake 25–30 minutes, until eggs are set and the tops are golden in a few spots. Serve warm or cold. Freeze leftovers.

Your snacking philosophy should mirror your healthy eating philosophy: eat minimally processed foods that mostly come from plants and don't eat too much of anything. For great snacks, try the excellent foods I suggest here (eat them in larger quantities as part of a meal). The amount you have should be determined by how hungry you are and how large or small your next meal will be. If you want to eat less at your next meal, then try having a larger snack, but if you are eating well-balanced, satisfying meals, then a piece of fruit or a handful of cherry tomatoes may be all you need to tide you over. However, kids should be allowed to eat as much as they want of what they are offered. If you are active or need help with controlling your blood sugar, be sure to either have an item from the Stand-Alone category or combine one item from the Carbohydrates column with one item from the Proteins/Fats column. Think of the Miscellaneous foods as condiments instead of "free foods," and remember that a little bit goes a long way in perking up your snacks. The possibilities are endless...

## Jessica's Body Fat Testing

### Friday, September 16

West Hollywood 12:00pm

### Monday, September 19

Pacific Palisades 12:00pm

Marina del Rey 4:00pm

### Tuesday, September 20

Pasadena 1:00pm

Silver Lake/Los Feliz 4:00pm

### Wednesday, September 21

Tarzana 11:30am

Encino 2:00pm

Sherman Oaks 4:30pm

### Thursday, September 22

Valley Village 2:30pm

Hollywood 4:30pm

### Friday, September 23

Century City 12:00pm

\*Testing method is Bioelectrical Impedance and is not appropriate for people with pacemakers or osteoporosis, pregnant women or children. Be well-hydrated for most accurate results.

BON APPETIT!

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