

Purdue Extension Does...Smart Summer Snacking

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School will soon be out and for many moms they are already feeling the stress of feeding hungry, growing kids during the busy days of summer. Many parents share with me that snacking for their children is one of their greatest challenges.

Ellen Satter, a registered dietician and family therapist, offers some great advice in her book Secrets of Feeding a Healthy Family: “To go to meals hungry but not starved, children need sit down snacks between times. Letting them graze for food or drinks (except water) spoils meals.” According to Satter: Parents have the responsibility in feeding their children by deciding what healthy foods to offer, when to offer the foods and where to offer the foods. Children have the responsibility to decide how much food they will eat and whether or not they will eat the food a parent offers.

So when it comes to snacking, I would encourage parents to plan time for healthy snacking this summer. It's important to sit down for snacking and not snack on foods in front of a screen. Avoid eating snacks on the run or in the car. It's all about trying to be more mindful with our eating and enjoying our food choices.

Think about providing snacks that will include foods from the MyPlate food groups. The MyPlate food groups include: lean protein foods, fruits and vegetables, whole grain foods, and dairy foods. It's a great idea to select foods from two of the MyPlate food groups in any combination for a snack like adding peanut butter to a whole-wheat mini bagel.

Be sure to plan when snacks will be served allowing enough time before the next meal so your child have time to get hungry again by mealtime. And remember to offer water in between meals.

For the growing child, parents need to provide a sit-down bedtime snack, even if your child didn't eat much at dinner. Be sure to make it something filling but not so thrilling. Whole

grain cereal with milk, crackers with cheese, leftover slice of the dinner pizza, or a quick parfait of fruit and yogurt would be good choices.

Try this Easy Parfait recipe for a fun snack idea that's quick with 10 minutes to prep and simple enough for even the young child in your family to make. Mashed bananas and a bit of cinnamon or vanilla lend natural sweetness to the plain yogurt. The only added sugar in this treat might come from the cereal you select!

INGREDIENTS:

2 very ripe medium bananas

1 container (6 oz.) plain low-fat yogurt (or 3/4 cup)

1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon or vanilla extract

2 cups cut-up fresh fruit of your choice (strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, nectarines, peaches and/or sweet cherries)

2 cups cereal of choice (wheat bran flakes, round toasted oats, cornflakes, sweetened oat and bran, honey graham, frosted bite-sized shredded wheat biscuits or crispy corn and rice)

DIRECTIONS:

Peel bananas and place in medium bowl. Use fork to mash bananas. Stir yogurt, and cinnamon or vanilla into banana. In four 12-ounce containers like jelly jars, glasses or plastic storage containers, alternate layers of yogurt mixture, fruit and cereal. Serve immediately or refrigerate until snack time.