



Make Snacks Something To Smile About



For toddlers and preschoolers, snacks are as important as meals because they can't eat enough in three meals to get all the nutrition they need in day. After the age of twelve months, growth rates slow dramatically, and so do appetites. Top that off with a new tendency towards picky eating and you have no room for calories that come without nutrients. That's why even the snacks have to be as nutritious as meals.

😊 Nutritious foods now have to be carefully chosen to entice an appetite AND provide important nutrition.

😊 The appearance of a food may be the one of the biggest barriers to getting a toddler to eat. Identifiable shapes and bright colors are sure ways to stimulate interest.

😊 Kids like to play with their food. Think of it as 'interacting'. It's a way to learn about the food. Allow your tot to have fun with their snack. How tall can you build that stack of [Earths Best Organic Smiley Snacks?](#)

😊 Putting bright green spinach in the form of a smiley face may not be enough to get your toddler to eat it. Instead of fighting over spinach, find a friendlier food with comparable nutrition. That's where smart snacking comes in. Many toddler friendly snacks are now fortified with many of the same nutrients found in less accepted foods. For example, [Earth Best Sesame Street Smiley Snacks](#) have the iron and fiber of spinach.

😊 The food and the portion need to be tot size. Pieces should be easy to pick up and handle to encourage self-feeding, and small enough to feel manageable. Tot's portion size is at most, $\frac{1}{4}$ that of an adult. They simply don't have room for a whole apple, but a quarter of an apple, cut into slices they do.

😊 Instead of asking your toddler what he wants for a snack, give him a choice of healthy foods. "Do you want an apple or a strawberry [Sunny Day Snack Bar](#) with your [milk](#)?"

😊 Ideally a snack will include foods from two of the of the food groups. Children need to learn to eat a variety of foods, not just within a food group, but also between food groups. That variety will help ensure they get balanced nutrition. A piece of cheese from the dairy group and a cup of [100% juice](#) from the fruit group is a pleasing toddler snack. Crackers from the grain group and peanut butter from the protein group is another kid favorite.

😊 Some of the nutrients commonly deficient in children's diets include calcium, zinc, iron and fiber. Look for snacks to try and fill this gap. Whole grains, fruits and vegetables provide fiber. Fortified cereals, snacks and meat are good sources of iron. The best source of calcium is dairy products, but many foods are now fortified with calcium, such as [Earth's Best Peanut Butter and Strawberry Cereal bars](#). And zinc is prevalent in whole grains, peanuts, meat and fish. Many snack and cereals are fortified with zinc.

😊 Snacks that are pleasing, nutritious and fun are snacks you and your toddler can smile about!

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