



HACK YOUR SNACK: MUST-HAVE TIPS FOR EASY, HEALTHY SNACKS FOR YOUR FAMILY

30-minute lesson

GOAL

Encourage caregivers to make smart choices about the snacks they serve their kids.

OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Practice making healthy, homemade snacks.
- ✓ Share tips for saving time when buying and preparing healthy snacks.
- ✓ Practice comparing unit prices to save money.

KEY MESSAGES

- ✓ When you can, make your own snacks in place of packaged snacks. This helps kids get the healthy foods they need without the unhealthy fats, sugar, and salt that slows them down.
- ✓ Use unit prices to help you find better deals and bring home more fruits and veggies to use in snacks.
- ✓ The most important thing you can do to encourage healthy snacking is to model healthy snacking yourself.

MATERIALS

Flip chart or white board • Markers/pens • Name tags • Ingredients and equipment for your chosen recipes
• Samples of different types of packaged snacks (healthier and not-so- healthy) • Pre-made samples of healthy homemade snacks (in addition to those you prepare together in class - optional)
• Materials for kids' activity (if using - optional)

KIDS' ACTIVITIES

We have provided a booklet of activities that can be used with kids. The following are suggestions for specific activities that may be complementary to what caregivers are learning in this lesson. **You are not limited to this list** – feel free to use whatever activities are most appropriate for your situation.

Note that some activities are written for the whole family, but can be easily modified for an activity with only kids.

- For younger kids:
 - Fruit and Vegetable Placemats, page 43
 - Veggie Superhero, page 41
 - Any of the coloring sheets on pages 21-32
- For older kids:
 - Filling Up MyPlate, page 53
 - Nutrition Facts Shuffle, page 47

CAREGIVER HANDOUTS

We have provided a comprehensive set of handouts for each lesson that can be 1) used as references for the instructor to prepare for class 2) referenced verbally and/or visually during class to guide discussion 3) provided as take-homes for caregivers to reinforce what they learned in class and encourage further learning. **You are NOT required to provide all of these handouts as take-homes** (though you may if you wish). Feel free to pick and choose which you feel are most helpful and appropriate. However, we ask that **at a minimum you provide a printed copy of the recipe(s) you prepared in class, as well as the Making It Work at Home handout.**

Check off the handouts you plan to reference during class

- Reading Food Labels
- Compare Prices
- Set a Healthy Example
- Snack Smart
- Delicious Dips and Spreads
- Make Your Own Fruit Smoothies
- Make Your Own Muffins
- Make Your Own Trail Mix
- Great Whole Grains
- Make Your Own Baby Food
- Making It Work at Home**

RECIPE OPTIONS

Choose **at least 2-3 snacks** (or as many as time allows) for the hands-on cooking. The following chart provides some ideas. You may use other recipes if you wish – see CookingMatters.org/recipes for more ideas. If you are not using a Cooking Matters recipe, please be sure it contains only ingredients that are affordable and accessible for low-income caregivers, does not require fancy cooking tools, and follows healthy eating guidelines. If of interest and appropriate for your group, make your own homemade baby food in place of one snack.

To work within a 30-minute lesson, **please read the recipes carefully and determine whether you need to prepare any ingredients in advance (e.g., chopping veggies, pre-cooking grains or other ingredients) to fit within your timeframe.**

Snack Ideas			
Recipe Ideas	Prep and Cook Time	Time Saving Tips	Talking Points
Apple Wraps	Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 15 minutes	No advanced prep needed.	<p>“Get kids to help by spreading the peanut butter and assembling the wraps. If you’re in a peanut-free environment, sub in a different spread like hummus or sun butter.”</p> <p>“These wraps can also serve as a quick, no-cook meal. Throw in a little leftover chicken or a sprinkle of nuts or seeds if you like.”</p> <p>“Get creative by varying your fruits. You could use pears, sliced grapes, even dried fruits.”</p>

Recipe Ideas	Prep and Cook Time	Time Saving Tips	Talking Points
Delicious Dips and Spreads handout	Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 0 minutes	Prepare fruits and vegetables in advance. Focus lesson making dips and spreads.	<p>“Kids love to dip their foods. Particularly with picky kids, dips are a great way to add new flavors that will encourage kids to eat their fruits and vegetables.”</p> <p>“Dips can be made on the weekends, or when you have a little extra time, and used throughout the week. Get kids involved in the mixing and mashing!”</p>
Snack Smart handout	Prep Time: 10 - 60 minutes Cook Time: 0 minutes	Choose snacks that can be completed in lesson time. If choosing frozen snack, prepare in advance.	<p>“Let your kids help prepare the snacks: they can wash, peel and mash fruits or veggies, spread, and add ingredients.”</p> <p>“Planning is key – think about when you’ll have some extra time to assemble the snacks and store for easy grabbing throughout the week.”</p> <p>“For older kids who can help themselves, make sure healthy snacks are easier to access than less healthy foods. Keep them pre-assembled and in plain sight.”</p>
Make Your Own Trail Mix handout	Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 0 minutes	No advanced prep needed.	<p>“Trail mix can satisfy those cravings for savory crunchy foods and is easy to have on hand in place of chips and other packaged snacks.”</p> <p>“This one is perfect for beginning to get younger kids familiar with food prep. They can help measure and mix. They can also help divide and bag into servings for use throughout the week.”</p>
Make Your Own Muffins handout	Prep Time: 10 – 20 minutes Cook Time: 50-60 minutes	Bake one batch in advance for tasting.	<p>“Store-bought muffins are typically full of added sugar and other less healthy ingredients. Kids love to mix muffin ingredients and smell them baking. Make your own for a fun activity together.”</p>

Recipe Ideas	Prep and Cook Time	Time Saving Tips	Talking Points
Homemade Granola	Prep Time: 15 minutes Cook Time: 10-15 minutes	Make one batch in advance to allow to cool for tasting.	<p>“Making your own granola allows you to limit the amount of sugar and fat that goes in; store-bought granolas are typically high in both.”</p> <p>“Be creative and try different types of dried fruit like raisins, cranberries, apricots or dates.”</p> <p>“Granola is a great quick snack, especially when on-the-go; put some in a zip-lock bag and keep it handy.”</p>
Homemade Corn Tortilla Chips	Prep Time: 5 minutes Cook Time: 10 minutes	No advanced prep needed.	<p>“Try making your own tortilla chips instead of buying them at the store.”</p>
Yogurt Parfait	Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 0 minutes	No advanced prep needed.	<p>“Yogurt parfaits you buy pre-made often have added sugar and cost as much as a whole tub of yogurt. Make your own for a healthier, lower- cost treat.”</p>
Fruit Tarts	Prep Time: 30 minutes Cook Time: 10 minutes	Preheat oven. Have fruit prepared in advance.	<p>“Works as a snack or healthier dessert.”</p>
Fruit Smoothies	Prep Time: 5 minutes Cook Time: 0 minutes	No advanced prep needed.	<p>“Cut costs and added sugar by making your own delicious smoothie.”</p>
Make Your Own Baby Food handout	Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 10 minutes	Prepare batch in advance and allow to cool for tasting.	<p>“Fruits and vegetables are a great first food for baby. Start with mild- tasting fruits and vegetables, such as bananas, avocados, sweet and white potatoes, peas, and winter squash.”</p> <p>“Making your own helps cut down on family food costs.”</p>

CLASS TIME

PAPERWORK (5 MINUTES):

As caregivers arrive, have them complete the demographics portion of the participant survey and sign a waiver.

MAIN COURSE: LESSON TOPIC (22 MINUTES):

INTRODUCTION: (3 MINUTES)

1. **Welcome caregivers.** Introduce instructors and any other volunteers or helpers.
2. **Set expectations.** Explain caregivers will learn how to save time and money by preparing quick and healthy snacks at home, and how to use unit pricing to save money.
3. **Get acquainted.**



“Show of hands — Who has infants? Toddlers and preschoolers? School-aged children? Teenagers?” Make note of this information so you can focus on sharing tips that are most relevant for the age groups represented.

Let caregivers know that we will dive right in so we have time for food preparation, but their questions and ideas are welcome throughout the lesson!

HANDS-ON SNACK PREPARATION AND DISCUSSION (19 MINUTES)

1. **Begin by having caregivers prepare snacks together.**

***NOTE:** If you have a helper to lead children, pull the kids into a separate activity of your choosing while caregivers prepare food and have a discussion. If not, identify a specific cooking task for kids or give them a designated area for independent play.*

- Have caregivers wash hands using proper technique.
- Introduce today's recipes. Point out that making your own snacks in place of packaged snacks can help kids get the healthy foods they need without the unhealthy fats, sugar, and salt that slows them down.
- Delegate different recipe steps as needed. As caregivers work:



“How often do your kids snack on a typical day?”

- Explain that because of their smaller tummies and growing bodies, kids get a significant amount of their food each day from snacks. If those snacks are typically filled with less nutritious foods, this can really add up over the course of a day.



“What do you think makes a healthy snack? What makes it hard to eat healthier snacks?”

- Write the group’s ideas for what makes a healthy snack on flip-chart paper. Guide the group to a shared understanding that healthy snacks should contain at least one serving of fruit or vegetables and have minimal added sugar, salt, or saturated fat. Address common challenges to eating healthier snacks and let caregivers offer ideas to each other to overcome those challenges. Use the following table to offer ideas as needed.

BARRIERS TO HEALTHY SNACKING	
Caregiver	Ideas
“Packaged, less healthy snacks are more convenient.”	<p>Cut up and pre-package fruit and veggie snacks or other homemade healthy snacks in zip-top baggies or small storage containers.</p> <p>Keep non-perishable healthy snacks (like trail mix, raisins or whole-grain crackers) in convenient places like your car, purse, or pantry. Have perishable snacks (like pre- packaged fruits and veggies) up front and ready to pull out quickly from the fridge.</p>
“I get confused when I buy packaged snacks – I have no idea what is healthy.”	<p>Point out that many words and phrases on the front of a package can be misleading – for example, a food that claims to be “fat free” may sound healthy, but it could be full of added sugar. Reading the Nutrition Facts Panel and the ingredients list on the back of the package is the only way to be sure what you’re getting. Encourage caregivers to compare labels and look for snacks that are lower in saturated fat, added sugar, and sodium.</p>
“Packaged, less healthy snacks seem less expensive.”	<p>Explain that in today’s lesson we will learn how to use unit prices to make affordable choices on snacks. Spoiler alert: packaged is not always cheaper!</p>
“I’m short on time.”	<p>Spend 10-15 minutes on a weekend or another day you have the time to create healthy snacks for the week. A little advanced planning goes a long way.</p> <p>Involve kids in the process! Food time can double as family time and even learning time. See more tips on this below.</p> <p>When making things like trail mix or granola, double or triple the recipe and put single servings in zip-lock bags for future easy snacking. This cuts down on the number of times you need to prep and cook.</p>
“My kids beg for the packaged stuff.”	<p>Making healthy snacks together often gives kids what they want even more than sweet or salty snacks – time with you. The more fun, the better! Serve in fun ways like using cut-up fruits and veggies to make a clown face. Have them make healthier versions of their packaged snack favorites – like using real tortillas to make homemade tortilla chips.</p> <p>Even little kids can help! Small hands can scoop seeds out of a cantaloupe, mash beans with a fork to make a dip, stir fruit into yogurt, sprinkle onion or garlic powder (or cinnamon) on home-made tortilla chips. Food time is learning time, and learning time is together time. For example, let kids count out the number of carrot sticks or measure a quarter cup of trail mix to put in a zip-top baggies.</p> <p>Remind caregivers that their kids are always watching them. If caregivers start to eat more homemade snacks in place of packaged snacks, their kids will notice and do the same in the long run.</p>

- Wrap up the discussion by pointing out that it's not all or nothing! Even one or two more fruit- and veggie-filled snacks each week makes a difference! Encourage caregivers to start small and do what they can.
- Move on to discuss ways to save money on healthy home-made snacks. Review the Compare Prices handout and discuss ways to save money on snacks using unit pricing. Provide examples such as:
 - The same food in different forms (baby versus whole carrots, pre-popped versus pop-at-home popcorn kernels)
 - Different size containers (single-serving packages versus larger containers that you can package out at home)
 - Different brands of the same food (name brand versus generic)
- If time permits, have caregivers practice making comparisons using unit prices. For example, have them determine price per cup of cooked popcorn when you buy it pre-popped versus popping it at home yourself (from a bulk container, NOT in microwaveable bags). Or, talk about how many snack servings you can get from a bag of whole carrots or a 3-lb bag of apples compared to how many servings you can get from a large bag of chips, then compare price per serving.
- Acknowledge that there are often time trade-offs to save money – for example, chopping carrots into sticks instead of buying baby carrots. Address time concerns using the suggestions in the Barriers to Healthy Snacking table on page 6 of this lesson.
- Point out that comparing unit prices can help you find better deals and bring home more fruits and veggies to use in snacks.

3. If kids and caregivers have been separated, bring them back together to eat the snacks.

- As kids eat, ask them to comment on their favorite snack they tried today and what they liked about it.

CLOSING (3 MINUTES):

- **ENCOURAGE:** Encourage caregivers to choose one thing they learned today that they will commit to trying at home this week. Have them share aloud if they are willing.
- **TAKE:** Share handouts for caregivers to take home, as well as any incentive items you are providing. **Caregivers must complete the participant survey questions and return the forms to you before receiving their take-home items.**

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