



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

*60-minute lesson*

### GOAL

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

### OBJECTIVES

- ✓ Practice making healthy, homemade snacks.
- ✓ Practice reading food labels and identifying healthier choices when choosing prepackaged 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.
- ✓ When you do buy packaged snacks or other foods, read the food labels to help you make smarter choices.
- ✓ 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](http://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.

Snack Ideas			
Recipe Ideas	Prep and Cook Time	Time Saving Tips	Talking Points
<a href="#">Apple Wraps</a>	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
<a href="#">Delicious Dips and Spreads handout</a>	Prep Time: 10 minutes Cook Time: 0 minutes	No advanced prep needed.	<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>
<a href="#">Snack Smart handout</a>	Prep Time: 10 - 60 minutes Cook Time: 0 minutes	<p>Choose snacks that can be completed in lesson time.</p> <p>If choosing frozen snack, prepare in advance.</p>	<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 preassembled and in plain sight."</p>
<a href="#">Make Your Own Trail Mix handout</a>	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>
<a href="#">Homemade Corn Tortilla Chips</a>	Prep Time: 5 minutes Cook Time: 10 minutes	No advanced prep needed.	"Try making your own tortilla chips instead of buying them at the store."
<a href="#">Fruit Tarts</a>	Prep Time: 30 minutes Cook Time: 10 minutes	Preheat oven.	"Works as a snack or healthier dessert."
Recipe Ideas	Prep and Cook Time	Time Saving Tips	Talking Points

<a href="#">Make Your Own Muffins handout</a>	Prep Time: 10 – 20 minutes Cook Time: 50-60 minutes	Bake one batch in advance for tasting in class.	<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>
<a href="#">Homemade Granola</a>	Prep Time: 15 minutes Cook Time: 10-15 minutes	No advanced prep needed.	<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 plastic zip bag and keep it handy.”</p>
<a href="#">Yogurt Parfait</a>	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>
<a href="#">Fruit Smoothies</a>	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>
<a href="#">Make Your Own Baby Food handout</a>	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 (50 MINUTES):

#### INTRODUCTION: (5 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, how to read labels for packaged snacks, and how to use unit pricing to save money.
3. **Get acquainted.**

ASK

*“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.

ASK

*“What are you looking forward to learning in this session?”* Write their responses on flipchart paper and make an effort to cover as many of their questions as possible.

#### HANDS-ON SNACK PREPARATION AND DISCUSSION (45 MINUTES)

1. **Begin by facilitating a discussion with caregivers on choosing healthy, affordable snacks.**

***NOTE:** If you have a helper to lead children, this is a good time to pull kids into a separate activity of your choosing while caregivers discuss.*

ASK

*“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.

ASK

*“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 1-2 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. Address other challenges mentioned by caregivers if time permits.

<b>BARRIERS TO HEALTHY SNACKING</b>	
<b>Caregiver Challenge</b>	<b>Ideas</b>
"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."	Explain that in today's lesson we will discuss how to use the Nutrition Facts Panel to identify healthier choices.
"Packaged, less healthy snacks seem less expensive."	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!
"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. 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.</p> <p>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>

- 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.
- Explain that today we will learn how to compare packaged snacks and to make our own quick and easy homemade snacks.



*“What do you look for on food packages when you buy snacks?”*

- 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. Share tips on what to look for on a food label, using the Reading Food Labels handout.
- Place a variety of popular packaged snacks on a table, particularly those that are marketed to children (e.g., single-serving yogurts, fruit snacks, snack bars, chips, cookies) and include some healthier options. Ask caregivers to practice comparing two of the labels.

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**TIP:** If kids are present for this activity, model the ways in which caregivers and kids can work together to find healthier foods and share learning time together. For example, three- to five-year-olds can read the numbers as caregivers point to them and discuss which numbers are higher or lower. Older kids can help line the packages up in numerical order for certain nutrients.

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- When they are done, talk about how caregivers determined which was the least and most healthy snack. Ask caregivers to share what surprised them as they looked at the labels. Point out packaged snacks that can be healthy choices, particularly when you combine them with a serving of fruits or vegetables (e.g., low-sodium nuts, dried fruit like raisins, whole grain crackers, plain yogurt).
2. **If kids and caregivers have been separated, bring them back together to prepare and eat healthy snacks.**
- 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 (and that caregivers saw in many of the packaged snacks from the previous activity).
  - Have kids and caregivers wash hands using proper technique.

- As they prepare the snacks together, talk about ways to save money on healthy homemade 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 bulk 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)
- 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.
- Move on to discuss a common challenge: helping kids to enjoy healthy snacks. Emphasize that one of the most effective strategies for helping kids develop good attitudes towards healthy eating over the long-term is modeling an enjoyment of healthy foods yourself.



*What does it mean to be a role model for your kids around healthy snacking? How are you doing this already? How might you be modeling unhelpful attitudes or behaviors towards snacking? What's one modeling behavior you think you could try this week?"*

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

### CLOSING (5 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.
- **ASK:** Model conversation starters between families by asking kids to share with caregivers their favorite part of today's session, the best food they tried, and/or something they want to try helping with in the kitchen at home.
- **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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