

Teeth Friendly Snack Food Ideas

from *TheDentistDad.com*

The absolute, number one at home snack is: **Leftovers!**

Ideally snacks are simply mini-meals. Throw some chicken, veggies, and fruit on a plate with or without sauces. Have eggs and bacon as a snack. Leftovers are better for teeth than something from a box!

Fruits and Vegetables:

Apples, whole	Grapes
Apple slices, precut*	Melon
Avocado	Nectarines
Blueberries**	Peaches
Bell pepper slices	Pears
Carrots*	Peas
Celery	Olives
Cherry tomatoes	Pickles
Coconut	Purple cabbage
Cherry tomatoes	Raspberries*
Cucumbers*	Seaweed
Edamame	Strawberries
Frozen Vegetables (microwave)	

Dairy and Eggs:

- Cheese circles*
- Cheese Quesadilla**
- Cheese slices*
- Cheese sticks*
- Eggs, hard boiled*
- Eggs, scrambled
- Yogurt
- Yogurt with granola
- Yogurt with fresh fruit (parfait)
- Yogurt, Greek

Meats:

Beef jerky*	Rotisserie Chicken
Ham	Salami*
Lox	Turkey
Pepperoni*	Deli meat
Roast Beef	

Spreads and dips:

Apple sauce	Butter
Cream cheese	Ranch
Peanut butter ¹	Ketchup
Hummus	Mustard
Guacamole	BBQ sauce
Salsa	Sunflower seed butter

Grains:

- Oatmeal
- Whole grain bread
- Whole grain toast*
- Bagels*
- Soft pretzels*
- Popcorn
- Thawed pancakes (no syrup)*
- Pita bread
- Muffins*
- Clif-Z bars™
- Aussie bites™
- Granola Bars*

(try for more whole grain, and avoid the really sticky ones.)

Combinations Ideas:

- Meat and cheese*
- Cucumbers and cream cheese
- Celery and peanut butter
- Celery and cream cheese
- Toast and peanut butter cut into triangles
- Pita bread and hummus
- Bagels and cream cheese*
- Veggies and hummus
- Veggies and guacamole
- Veggies and ranch
- Fruit and cheese*
- Olives stuffed with ham cubes
- Grilled cheese sandwiches
- Cheese Quesadilla*

¹: No sugar added peanut butter is best, but if you get the popular brand with sugar added it is probably fine.

Reminder: Choose age appropriate snacks. Nuts, grapes, hot dogs, and sausages are common choking hazards, especially in children ages 3 and under. Cut hot dogs in half. Cut grapes length wise or quarter. Wait until a child is old enough to eat enough, usually when they at least can spell it.

Nuts:

- Almonds,
- Almonds, slivered
- Cashews
- Pecans
- Pistachios
- Walnuts

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I didn't realize that crackers were one of the biggest cavity causers, because they are such a sticky starch, until three years after I graduated dental school. Figuring that out changed everything for me as far as preventing cavities. No wonder so many kids don't eat much sugar and still get surprised by cavities.

The first time I explain this to parents, I often get asked,
What can I feed my kids other than crackers?

Here is the answer!

The following page is a list of ideas compiled from over 50 moms. It is what real parents are already doing. While compiling the list, I only included snack items that I personally would give to my own kids (from a dentist dad perspective.) I am focusing on the teeth, and not necessarily nutrition. For example, crackers and dried fruit aren't bad for you, but they don't make the list since they are so sticky and starchy. The goal of these snacks is to avoid extremely sticky starches. Remember the prevention principle to keep snack times organized into 5 or 6 mini-meals a day with only water in between meals. If you don't yet understand why having organized meals and snack times each day are important, please visit www.theDentistDad.com/articles because understanding that concept is more important than the actual foods themselves.

Keep in mind, from a nutrition and dental perspective, whole foods are better as a rule, although they require weekly grocery store visits. While in the grocery store, try to stay near the outside of the store. Most of the processed foods are in the aisles stored in boxes. If it is from a box, it is most likely not great for teeth.

For "on the go" options, it limits your selection. Most snacks should hopefully be eaten at home while sitting down and can be considered a mini-meal. However, being on-the-go is a reality. I have marked the on-the-go snacks with an asterik.* Some take no prep work, but some require placing them in a ziplock bag before hand, and occasionally slicing them.

As I mentioned before, processed foods aren't as ideal, but I still give them to my kids. I like softer bread style "bars" as opposed to dried fruit bars for the sake of teeth, because bread isn't sticky as dried dates. It is better to have fresh bread instead of crackers when it comes to teeth because of the stickiness factor!

I hope this list gives you some new ideas. If you have any other great things to add (or take off), email me at Roger@thedentistdad.com.

Keep smiling,
Dr. Roger Lucas, DDS



Dentists: Feel free to hand this out to patients.

Check out my website at TheDentistDad.com

to avoid surprise cavities and find information about my book, *More Chocolate, No Cavities*, if you want to all of the tricks to keep your child cavity free.