

# BANANAS HANDOUT

## Snack Suggestions

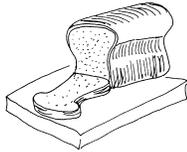
Encouraging children to eat right is good for everyone in the family, so help kids make healthy choices by keeping wholesome snacks at eye-level and within reach. Put sugary treats out of sight and up high. Let the kids help out when you cook and spend time planting a vegetable garden together, or just a few pots with seeds.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommends that we eat more whole-grain foods every day, choose a variety of fruits and vegetables throughout the week, and make dairy and meat choices low-fat and lean. Eating light and lean and exercising every day is the basis for a long and healthy life – what a great gift to give to our children (and ourselves)!

Note that some foods such as hot dogs, peanut butter, corn-on-the-cob, popcorn, raw carrots, celery, apples, grapes, etc., can be too difficult for very young children to chew and swallow without choking. These foods should be either mashed, cooked, cut in very small pieces, or eliminated altogether as snacks for little ones. Be conscious of any food sensitivities or allergies and enjoy your meals together.

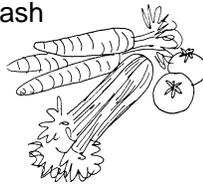
**Breads and Grains** – Make half of your daily grains **whole-grains** (look for the word, “whole” in the list of ingredients) and choose low-fat, low-sodium.

- whole-grain breads or carrot/banana/pumpkin breads
- cereals, oatmeal, granola, grits
- corn tortillas, corn bread, popcorn (older kids only)
- brown rice, rice cakes
- bagels, muffins, pita, crackers
- waffles, pancakes, French toast
- pasta with olive oil or tomato sauce



**Vegetables** – Choose a variety of fresh or frozen, cooked or raw. Focus on green and orange veggies. Note that some raw vegetables and fruits can be a choking hazard for younger children.

- celery sticks, baby carrots, green beans, cucumbers, sweet peppers
- greens (collard, mustard, spinach, etc.)
- baked potatoes, sweet potatoes, squash
- corn on the cob, artichokes, peas
- vegetable soups
- salads with vinegar or yogurt
- vegetable juices



**Fruits** – Choose a variety and go easy on the fruit juice due to its sugar content.

- bananas, berries, melons, grapes (cut into bite-size pieces for smaller children)
- oranges, apples, pears, tangerines, peaches, plums, apricots, mangoes, pineapple
- avocados, tomatoes
- dried fruits like raisins, apricots
- smoothies, 100% fruit juices, frozen-juice Popsicles



**Dairy Products** – Low-fat and low-sugar.

- low-fat milk (reduced lactose, if necessary)
- low-fat yogurt or frozen yogurt
- cheese cubes or slices with crackers
- cottage cheese with fruit or celery
- milk or yogurt shakes
- puddings or custards made with milk



**Meat, Fish, Poultry, Beans, Nuts** – Go for lean protein and bake, broil or grill it.

- chicken sandwiches or salad
- cold cuts (lean, low-salt)
- hot dogs (cut up), hamburgers, mini meatballs
- eggs (scrambled, boiled, quiche, frittata)
- tuna (sandwiches and casseroles; for health, consider the origin of the fish)
- salmon, seafood
- cooked peas and beans (mash for younger children)
- nut and seed butters: peanut, almond, sesame, soybean – on crackers or celery or apple (check for any history of allergies first!)
- tofu (natural, seasoned, baked or fried)

**More Snacks** – Use oils and fats sparingly; liquid oils are preferred; limit solid fats such as butter and margarine.

- pizza slices, English muffin pizzas
- macaroni and cheese, pasta with meat sauce
- tacos, quesadillas (tortillas with cheese)
- sandwiches (including grilled cheese)
- stir-fry with rice
- sushi (with cooked seafood or vegetables)
- curries (with rice or potatoes)
- soups, stews



Children love simple cooking projects: sifting, measuring, pouring, stirring, mashing, sprinkling – tasting! Preparing food encourages adventuresome eating and sets a good example for your kids. Even sandwiches can be fun to make. Have children cut them into shapes with cookie cutters and give them some interesting names: moon munchies, witches' fingers, sandwich-guys, etc. Here are some recipes that children can help prepare. Start with the ingredients all ready. Wash hands and no tasting from the bowl. Supervise – be careful of hot stoves, boiling liquids and sharp knives. Unplug blenders and mixers when not in use. Feel free to experiment with the ingredients and have fun in the kitchen!

### **Banana Milkshake**

1 cup milk  
1/2 ripe banana  
ice cubes

Blend ingredients in a blender.  
(Get creative: add a handful of strawberries for a strawberry shake; or add 1/4 teaspoon vanilla.) Makes 1-2 servings.

### **Fruit Smoothie**

1 handful frozen fruit, such as bananas (peel before freezing), berries, mango/peach/nectarine/ pineapple chunks, etc.  
1 cup orange juice  
1 cup milk, yogurt, or soy milk (optional)

Combine ingredients in a blender. Mix until smooth. This is a great way to use fruit that might otherwise go bad. Freeze summer fruits to make winter smoothies!

### **Fruit Salad**

1/2 cup sliced banana  
1/2 cup chopped apple  
1/2 chopped papaya  
1/2 cup grapes  
1/2 cup orange juice

Prepare ingredients. Mix and serve. Or give older children Popsicle sticks and let them make their own fruit skewers. Younger children can use straight pretzels to spear soft fruit. Makes about 4 servings.

### **Tasty Trailmix**

Mix together Cheerios and raisins (or other dried fruit, cut into bit-sized pieces if necessary). Munch.

### **Vegetable Quesadillas**

1 large carrot, grated  
1 zucchini, grated  
8 flour tortillas  
1/4 cup shredded cheese

Mix carrot and zucchini in a bowl. Sprinkle 1/2 cup of vegetable mix over each of four tortillas. Top each with 3 tablespoons cheese. Cover with a second tortilla. Heat both sides in a pan until hot and cheese melts. Cut tortillas into quarters. (Another option: use refried beans instead of the grated vegetables.)

### **Roasted Vegetables**

1 yam or sweet potato  
1 baking potato  
1 cup winter squash, peeled and cubed into 1" pieces  
1 teaspoon olive oil

Cut the yam (or sweet potato) and baking potato into slices and let children cut out shapes with small cookie cutters (about 1" in diameter), or cut into "French fry" slices. Mix all vegetables in a bowl with the olive oil. Spread on a cookie sheet and bake in a 400°F oven for 10-15 minutes – finger food!

### **Banana Pops**

bananas  
Popsicle sticks  
lemon juice  
grape nuts

Put Popsicle sticks into banana halves. Dip bananas into a mixture of half lemon juice and half water. Roll bananas in crushed Grape Nuts or rice cereal, place on wax paper and freeze.

### **English Muffin Pizza**

English muffins  
tomato sauce  
sliced vegetables  
grated cheese

Spread 1 tablespoon tomato sauce on muffin halves. Cover with sliced vegetables (olives, green peppers, etc.). Top with grated cheese. Bake at 400°F until cheese melts.

### **Asian Cucumber Salad**

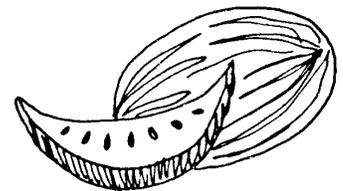
cucumber  
rice wine vinegar  
soy sauce

Peel and slice cucumbers. Top with rice wine vinegar and/or soy sauce and serve.

### **Vegetable Juice**

1/4 cup chopped celery  
1/4 cup coarsely grated carrot  
1 cup tomato juice

Combine ingredients in blender or juicer. Blend until smooth. Makes 1-2 servings.



You can find more information about eating a balanced diet on the USDA website, [MyPyramid.gov](http://MyPyramid.gov). The site gives food portion recommendations for family members based on age, gender, and levels of daily physical activity.

BANANAS has several videos on child nutrition, including "Smart Snacking for Children," (#341) and "Food for Thought," (#362). A refundable \$50 deposit is required to check out videos from our office. Call 658-7353, or check our website, [www.bananasinc.org](http://www.bananasinc.org), for our video-lending policy. Thanks to *Healthy Latino Recipes*, Public Health Institute, 1999; *Making Meals Matter*, Dairy Council of California, 1993; and BANANAS staff for snack recipes.