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## Module - Healthy Snacks

**Time:**

15-30 minutes

**WIC Status:**

Child

Any Pregnant Status



**Learning Objectives:**

Participants will:

1. Identify the importance of healthy snacks.
2. Be able to select a healthy snack using WIC foods.

**Handouts and Materials:**

- USDA 10 tips Nutrition Education Series
  - “Cut Back on Your Kid's Sweet Treats” DG Tip Sheet No. 13, June 2011
  - “MyPlate Snack Tips for Parents” DG Tip Sheet No. 24, March 2013 (optional)
- 5-2-1-0 Healthy Numbers for Kentucky Families brochure, KCHF, 2012

**Facilitating WIC Discussion Group Concepts:**

- Providing participants with a more meaningful nutrition education experience that involves interactive learning.
- As the certifying health professional, you will be the facilitator and moderate a group conversation-style discussion.
- Encourage all participants to participate but recognize that some participants may prefer not to speak in a group setting. If the participant cannot answer, chooses not to answer, or has a negative response, you may respond with a statement such as “Trying something new is not always easy.”
- It is important to establish “ground rules” for the group. For example:
  - Set the time, agenda, and the length of session
  - Establish rules on confidentiality and sharing of group responsibilities.
  - Clarify procedural issues, especially listening to, respecting ideas or comments and allowing time and opportunity for others in the group to share.

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## Outline – Healthy Snacks

### Icebreaker:

Have each participant introduce themselves and state the name and age of their children.  
(Optional)

### Facilitated Discussion Topic Opening Questions:

Ask one of the following questions to facilitate discussion:

- *What is your or your child's favorite snack?*
- *What WIC foods do you use for snacks?*

### Discussion Topics:

#### Benefits Gained from Healthy Snacking

Snacking has a bad reputation because it has become associated with junk food. However, snacking is an important part of staying healthy, as long as you are snacking on the right foods.

- Pregnant women, new mothers, and children have special nutrient needs that may not be met in 3 meals a day.
- Healthy snacks may help alleviate morning sickness, bloating for pregnant women and promote a healthy weight gain.
- Children can experience “food jags” or refusal to eat foods previously eaten. Healthy snacks can provide needed nutrients in the child’s diet.
- Healthy snacks for children should be provided 1 ½ to 2 hours before meals. Meals and snacks should be at planned times.
- Use caution when serving small, hard pieces of food to children less than four years of age due to the risk of choking.
- Young children are more likely to try a new food at snack time versus mealtime. It may take several tries (8-10) before a child accepts a new food.

#### Choosing Healthy Snacks

Some snacks are chosen out of habit, it will be easier to make changes when practical solutions are offered. The following are suggestions that will help you understand which snack foods are healthy snacks:

- Choose snack foods that are low in sugar:
  - Sugar contributes to cavities.
  - Sticky foods that stay on the teeth such as taffy and caramels are the worst offenders of tooth decay.
  - Good dental hygiene, including brushing, flossing, and rinsing are good preventive measures.

- Choose low fat dairy snack foods:
  - Low fat dairy is recommended for adults and children over 2 years old. (Children should receive whole milk until 2 years of age for brain development.)
  - Low fat dairy helps prevent obesity, cardiovascular disease and some cancer and teach children healthy eating habits.
- Include variety, moderation and balance when selecting healthy snacks.
  - Variety ensures that you get the nutrients you need.
  - Moderation ensures our calories are appropriate and to prevent weight gain.
  - Balance ensures that you eat foods that provide nutrition and appropriate calories.
  - Use foods from each food group.
  - Use MyPlate to help guide your snacking choices.
- Plan your snacks throughout the day.
  - Scheduling meals and snacks throughout the day helps to prevent grazing. Grazing leads to eating out of boredom or as a distraction, rather than eating for hunger and satiety.
  - When you have a plan you are less likely to spend extra money on less healthy snack foods.
  - Choose water for snacks. It is easy to pour on the calories with sugar sweetened beverages. Water does not have any calories, making it the perfect drink to quench your thirst.
  - Carry portable, inexpensive snacks with you. Fill a Ziploc bag with WIC cereal, a few pieces of small fruit, dried fruit, or fresh cut carrots. Freezing juice in small plastic containers will travel well. (avoid offering small, hard pieces of food to children less than four years of age due to the risk of choking )
  - Carry a water bottle or bottled water with you.

### **Choosing Nutritious Snacks Using WIC Foods**

WIC foods can be a part of healthy snacking. The following are suggestions for healthy snacks using WIC approved foods:

#### **Children 1-3 years old**

Cheese and crackers  
 Milk and graham crackers  
 Whole grain cereal, dry or with milk  
 Boiled egg  
 Smoothies using milk or juice and fruit  
 Bean, cheese and whole grain tortilla quesadilla  
 Fresh whole fruit (remove skin and cut in small pieces)

#### **Children 4 years and up and adults**

Celery and peanut butter  
 Vegetable sticks including celery  
 Cheese and crackers  
 Peanut butter and graham crackers  
 Bean, cheese and whole grain tortilla quesadilla  
 Boiled egg  
 Smoothies using milk or juice and fruit  
 Whole grain cereal, dry or with milk

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## Summary:

Healthy snacks are an important part of your eating plan throughout the day. Snacks are especially important for children. It is difficult to get enough of what they need in just 3 meals. Be sure to plan for snacks, timed between meals each day.

## Closing Activity/Questions:

Ask one of the following questions to conclude today's discussion.

- *What did you find most interesting about today's topic?*
- *Is there something new you may try?*
- *Was there something you heard today that you haven't heard before?*

## References:

- Pediatric Nutrition Handbook 6<sup>th</sup> Edition, American Academy of Pediatrics, 2009
- Child of Mine: Feeding With Love and Good Sense, Ellyn Satter, 2000, Bull Publishing Co., Boulder, Colorado
- 5-2-1-0 website: <http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/mch/hp/5210>
- USDA Choose MyPlate website: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/>

## Resources:

- 5-2-1-0 materials may be ordered from the pamphlet library or accessed at: the Kentucky Cabinet of Health and Family Services 5-2-1-0 website <http://chfs.ky.gov/dph/mch/hp/5210>
- The USDA 10 tips Nutrition Education Series, "Cut Back on Your Kid's Sweet Treats" DG Tip Sheet No. 13, June 2011 may be ordered from the pamphlet library or accessed at: <http://origin-www.choosemyplate.gov/healthy-eating-tips/ten-tips.html> or direct link <http://origin-www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/downloads/TenTips/DGTipsheet13CutBackOnSweetTreats.pdf>
- The USDA 10 tips Nutrition Education Series, "MyPlate Snack Tips for Parents" DG Tip Sheet No. 24, March 2013 may be found at: <http://origin-www.choosemyplate.gov/healthy-eating-tips/ten-tips.html> or direct link <http://origin-www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/downloads/TenTips/DGTipsheet24MyPlateSnackTipsforParents.pdf>