

Spring Snacks

to Celebrate the Season

by Sarah Muntel, RD

Spring has sprung, bringing sunnier and warmer days! For many, this change of seasons is an opportunity to kickstart healthier eating habits. Often, individuals embark on a “spring clean” of their diet, making healthier choices. Another notable change in spring for families involves a shift in activities and schedules. It’s a time for kids to explore new sports, families to spend more time outdoors, and groups to gather more frequently. However, as activities and events fill the calendar, more time is spent away from home, and snacks tend to find their way into the mix!

Why Consider Snacking?

Snacking becomes essential for various reasons:

- **Kids and Small Portions:** Children may consume small meal portions or leave meals unfinished, leading to the need for snacks between meals. Some may prefer having healthy snacks throughout the day instead of three traditional meals.
- **Busy Schedules:** Older kids who are engaged in practices or activities may require snacks before or after these events. As schedules become hectic, adhering to regular mealtimes often becomes challenging, making snacks a convenient solution for delayed dinners or lunches.
- **Nutrient Boost:** Snack time is always an opportunity to enrich your kids’ diet with extra nutrients!

What’s in Season this Spring?

Whenever you incorporate produce, it’s a win! Fruits and vegetables bring a variety of vitamins, minerals and fiber to your diet. Whether fresh, frozen or canned, they provide essential nutrition. Shopping for seasonal produce is beneficial because it ensures higher quality and freshness.

According to the USDA, the following fruits and vegetables are in season during spring:

- **Seasonal Fruits:** Apples, apricots, bananas, kiwi fruit, lemons, limes, pineapples, strawberries.
- **Seasonal Vegetables:** Asparagus, avocados, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, celery, collard greens, kale, lettuce, mushrooms, onions, peas, radishes, rhubarb, spinach, Swiss chard, turnips.

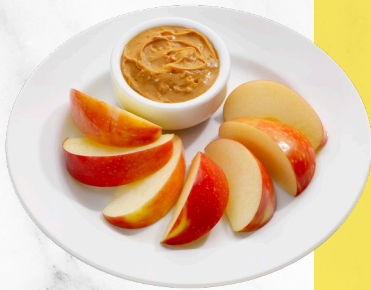


Putting it Together

Create a quick snack list to simplify life for busy families. Spring offers the perfect opportunity to introduce a variety of produce that will give your family diverse nutrients:

Snack Ideas:

- **Apples and Peanut Butter:** Enjoy a crunchy apple for fiber and Vitamin C paired with protein-rich peanut butter.
- **Yogurt and Banana:** Indulge in potassium and magnesium-packed bananas on top of low-sugar yogurt for a creamy, sweet snack.
- **Avocado Toast:** Savor healthy fats from avocados for flavor and satiety on whole-grain toast, adding fiber and energy to your snack.
- **Fruit and Dip:** Pair any spring fruit with a low-fat dip for an easy way to enjoy more produce.
- **Carrots, Celery and Cheese:** Benefit from the three C's – Vitamin C and A from veggies coupled with protein and calcium from cheese.
- **Cottage Cheese and Pineapple:** Experience Vitamin C, fiber and energy from juicy pineapple on top of cottage cheese for a satisfying snack.
- **Smoothie:** Blend kale, greens, apples and bananas with milk and protein powder for a quick power smoothie.
- **Hummus and Vegetables:** Dip your favorite veggies (peppers, carrots, cucumber) in hummus for a protein and fiber boost.



Give it a Try!



Looking for an on-the-go snack with grains, vegetables and fruit? Try these muffins for a delicious way to get some nutrients and energy.

Carrot and Banana Muffins

From EatingWell.com

Ingredients:

- 1 cup raisins
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup whole-wheat flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup oat bran
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup toasted wheat germ
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground allspice
- 4 large egg whites
- 1 cup packed brown sugar or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup Splenda Sugar Blend for baking
- 1 cup mashed bananas (2 medium bananas)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup low-fat milk
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup canola oil
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups shredded carrots (4 medium carrots)
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup chopped walnuts

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Coat 18 standard-size (2 $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch) muffin cups with cooking spray.
2. Place raisins in a small bowl and cover with hot water; let soak for 5 minutes. Drain and set aside.
3. Whisk whole-wheat flour, all-purpose flour, oat bran, wheat germ, baking powder, baking soda, salt, cinnamon and allspice in a large mixing bowl.
4. Whisk egg whites in a medium bowl until frothy. Add brown sugar (or Splenda) and whisk until dissolved. Mix in bananas, milk, oil and vanilla.
5. Make a well in the center of the dry ingredients. Add the wet ingredients, then stir with a rubber spatula until just combined. Gently stir in carrots and the drained raisins.
6. Scoop the batter into the prepared pan and sprinkle with nuts. Bake the muffins until the tops spring back when touched lightly, 15 to 20 minutes. Let cool in the pan for 5 minutes. Loosen the edges and turn the muffins out onto a wire rack.

Looking to infuse more produce into your day? A quick after-school snack can give you a boost of Vitamin C, A, and fiber! Serve with whole-grain chips, pretzels or apple slices.

Avocado Mango Salsa

From *SkinnyTaste.com*

Ingredients:

- 1 ripe mango, peeled and diced
- 5 ounces diced avocado from 1 medium
- 1 plum tomato, diced
- 1 clove garlic minced
- 1 jalapeño, seeded and diced
- ¼ cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
- ¼ cup chopped red onion
- ½ tablespoon olive oil
- kosher salt and fresh pepper to taste



Directions:

Combine all the ingredients and let them marinate in the refrigerator for 30 minutes before serving.

On the way to soccer practice? Need a quick snack? Try one of these on the way, or add protein powder for an extra boost of nutrients!

Super Mint Green Smoothie

From *Taste.com*

Ingredients:

- 2 ½ cups (625ml) So Good Almond Long Life Milk, chilled
- Half of a ripe avocado, chopped
- 1 banana, frozen
- 4 Medjool dates, pitted and chopped
- ½ cup fresh mint leaves
- 1 cup baby spinach leaves
- 2 tablespoons honey

Directions:

Place all the ingredients into a blender and blend until smooth and combined. Pour into glasses and serve.



About the Author:

Sarah Muntel, RD, is a Registered Dietitian with more than 20 years of experience working with surgical and medical weight-loss patients. She is passionate about helping people reach their health and wellness goals. In her free time, Sarah enjoys spending time with her husband and children, watching her children's activities, and going on walks with friends.



ABOUT THE OBESITY ACTION COALITION (OAC)

The Obesity Action Coalition (OAC) is a National non-profit organization dedicated to giving a voice to individuals affected by obesity and helping them along their journey toward better health. Our core focuses are to elevate the conversation of weight and its impact on health, improve access to obesity care, provide science-based education on obesity and its treatments, and fight to eliminate weight bias and discrimination.



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