

MAKING Munchies

MATTER

Better-for-you snacks kids will love

FAMILY FEATURES

Kids love to snack. But left to their own devices, most kids don't always make the healthiest snack choices. A new study of long-term eating patterns in children, from researchers at the University of North Carolina, shows that kids today are getting nearly one-third of their daily calories from unhealthy snacks such as chips, crackers and candy.

Nutritious and delicious snacks are as close as your produce aisle. Watermelon is practically a multivitamin unto itself — and its natural sweetness is something kids love.

Did You Know?

- A 2-cup serving of watermelon is an excellent source of Vitamins A, B6 and C.
- Vitamin A found in watermelon is important for optimal eye health.
- Vitamin B6 found in watermelon is used by the body to manufacture brain chemicals (neurotransmitters), such as serotonin, melatonin and dopamine, which preliminary research shows may help the body cope with anxiety and panic.
- Vitamin C in watermelons can help to bolster your immune system's defenses against infections and viruses and is known to stimulate the immune system and protect against free radical damage.
- A 2-cup serving of watermelon is also a source of potassium, a mineral necessary for water balance and found inside of every cell. People with low potassium levels can experience muscle cramps. A 2-cup serving has less than 10 percent of the daily reference value for potassium.

Try these fun recipes as after school and post-activity snacks. For more kid-friendly recipes and healthy eating tips, visit www.watermelon.org.

Send some healthy lunch munchies to school — watermelon chunks are an easy way to brighten up a sack lunch and give kids a tasty nutritional boost in the middle of the day.



Watermelon Kebabs

Watermelon Kebabs
 1-inch cubes of seedless watermelon
 Cheddar cheese
 Coffee stirrers or beverage straws
 Cut watermelon, turkey and cheese in cubes and skewer on stirrers or straws.

Watermelon Nachos
 Serves 6 to 8
 12 to 16 1/2-inch thick watermelon triangles with 3-inch sides
 2 cups Greek vanilla yogurt
 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
 A few drops almond extract
 1 cup Craisins
 1 cup white chocolate chips
 1/2 cup toasted sliced almonds
 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
 Arrange the watermelon triangles on a serving platter or glass cake stand. Mix yogurt with extracts and spoon yogurt over the watermelon in the fashion of nacho cheese sauce. Sprinkle craisins, white chocolate chips, and almonds over the yogurt and dust with cinnamon.

Watermelon Dippers
 8 ounces sour cream
 4 tablespoons sugar
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
 Watermelon sticks or small wedges
 Blend together the sour cream, sugar and vanilla in a small serving bowl. Use as a dip for the watermelon.

Watermelon Cut Outs
 Seedless watermelon, cut into 1/2- to 3/4-inch-thick slices
 Yogurt
 Granola or similar cereal
 Using your favorite cookie cutters, cut shapes out of watermelon slices. Frost with vanilla or other flavored yogurt. Sprinkle with granola.

Watermelon Berry Slush
 Makes 6 servings
 4 cups cubed, seeded watermelon
 1 10-ounce package frozen raspberries
 1 12-ounce bottle sparkling mineral water
 Place watermelon in a single layer in shallow pan; freeze until firm. Remove from freezer and let stand 5 minutes. Drop watermelon through food chute of a food processor or blender with the motor running. Add frozen raspberries alternately with mineral water, processing until smooth.

Watermelon Jelly Logs
 Makes 6 servings
 6 3-inch x 2-inch x 5-inch watermelon rectangles
 3 flavors all fruit or low sugar preserves
 6 ginger, molasses or peanut butter cookies
 Using a melon baller, cut 3 divots into a long side of each watermelon rectangle. Fill each divot with a different all fruit or low sugar preserve. Serve each rectangle with a cookie.

Healthy Eating Tips

- Healthy eating habits start at home. One of the best things you can do for your kids is to be a role model for smart food choices. Here are some simple things you can do to help your kids develop healthy lifelong habits.
- Shop for food together and take time to examine, discuss and select fruit and vegetables that catch your child's eye. Allow your child to help you to prepare these healthful foods. For example, let your child use a melon baller to create melon balls from watermelon, cantaloupe and honeydew to create a festive, nutritious and visually appealing dessert.
- Make healthy snacks available at all times for your children by keeping the fridge filled with flavorful, nutrient-rich treats such as grapes, cherries, carrots and watermelon cubes.
- Simple changes are easier for your child to get used to. Try switching from full fat milk to non-fat milk, serving sherbet, sorbet, ice milk or fruit juice bars, or adding fresh fruit to his or her cereal in the morning.
- Serve your children colorful, deeply pigmented plant food. These foods tend to offer tremendous nutritional value. For example, red peppers, carrots, broccoli, oranges and watermelon are all packed with minerals, vitamins and antioxidants.
- Start each day with breakfast, preferably fruit with low fat yogurt or granola. Make a fruit smoothie by blending watermelon cubes and a banana with crushed ice.



Watermelon Nachos



Watermelon Cut Outs



Watermelon Berry Slush



Watermelon Dippers



Watermelon Jelly Logs