

Why it's essential to plan ahead for snack time

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Whether in the classroom or on the playground, children need enough energy—and proper nutrition—to get them through the day.

Dr. Tina Ardon, a Mayo Clinic family medicine physician, says planning for snack time can teach [kids healthy habits](#) while keeping them full.

Food is fuel, and sensible snacks can bridge the gap between meals.

"For most of our kids, we're going to want to have some type of snack every couple of hours, depending on when they had breakfast, lunch and dinner," says Dr. Ardon.

Build snacks, including whole grains, fruits and vegetables, into your grocery list.

As for portions, elementary-aged kids need about a cup-and-a-half of fruits and vegetables per day—growing to about two-and-a-half cups per day for older kids.

"Cut up some raw vegetables and have some of that fruit prewashed so you can grab those quickly throughout the day," says Dr. Ardon. "It's much easier to grab something that's available to you versus going in and finding something that's less healthy."

Sticking to a routine can help kids become more comfortable making healthy choices.

"The more we can encourage them to stay on a diet of healthy fruits and [vegetables](#), drinking water as their main liquid, and we're going to set them up for success in the long term," says Dr. Ardon.

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