



After School Snacks

Kids come in from school and head straight to the kitchen looking for something to eat. How can you make sure your child gets nourished but still has room for a healthy dinner?

Talk about what snacks kids would like to have at snack time. Come up with a list of healthy options together and include a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. While a slice of cake or potato chips shouldn't be forbidden foods, such low-nutrient snacks shouldn't be on the everyday after-school menu. Pay attention to the amounts of protein, fiber, calcium and other important nutrients in foods. Choose snacks that are low in sugar, fat, and salt and have nutritional value. As a general guideline, a snack should contain about 150 calories.



Kids are more inclined to eat what's handy. Make healthy snacks available by packing them in their lunchboxes or have them visible and ready-to-eat at home. Leave foods that you'd like them to choose front and center on the counter or refrigerator. A hungry child is likely to take the path of least resistance. *See inside for good snack options for kids.*

Source: Kidshealth.org

We are pleased to present our Spring/Summer edition of the Stamford Pediatrics Newsletter. We have chosen a variety of topics relevant to many different age groups in order to address the diverse needs of our patient population. Our lead article addresses a common problem for many parents: healthy after-school eating. We have chosen this article in particular due to its relevance to the efforts of our First Lady who is working vigilantly to combat the ever-growing epidemic of childhood obesity.

We wish all of you a happy, safe and healthy spring/summer season.
The Doctors and Staff of Stamford Pediatric Associates

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MAKING A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

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Good Snack Options for Kids:

- Ants-on-a-log (celery topped with peanut butter and raisins)
- Egg boats (hard-boiled egg wedges topped with a cheese sail)
- Fruit kabobs
- Fruit smoothie
- Low fat string cheese
- Low fat yogurt
- Granola bars
- Mini pitas with hummus dip
- Vegetables with a fun dip, such as hummus, salsa, low fat ranch dressing
- Whole-grain crackers topped with cheese and pear slices

Easy to pack for kids on the go: trail mix, nuts, low sugar/whole grain cereals, pretzels, fresh or dried fruit, cut-up vegetables, light popcorn

If dinner is hours away, a more substantial snack such as half a sandwich, english muffin pizza, or quesadilla with low-fat cheese and salsa may be a good option.

Flying with Baby

If your travel plans this summer include flying with a baby, you may wonder what precautions you need to take.



Ears can be quite sensitive to changes in pressure. This is because the outer ear is separated from the middle ear by a thin membrane (the tympanic membrane or ear drum). Experiencing a difference in pressure across this membrane causes a sensation that many experience as temporary muffled hearing, discomfort, or even pain. Having a stuffy nose can increase a child's chances of ear pain.

Offer a bottle, breast or pacifier during the times when the pressure changes in the cabin are likely to be greatest—during takeoff and initial descent (about a half hour before landing). If your baby has a cold or ear infection you can also give an infant pain reliever.

Source: healthychildren.org

How do Infants Learn?

As soon as they are born, infants start to learn about the world from their experiences. They can see and hear what is happening around them and can communicate their needs and interests to others. Infants have the ability to see faces and objects of different shapes, sizes and colors. They can tell the difference between the voices of their parents and others.



Parents are their baby's first teacher. You can help your babies learn by playing with them. Infants love to look at you and hear your voice. Faces with all their expressions are usually more interesting than toys. Spend time talking, singing, and laughing. Play games of touching, stroking, and peek-a-boo.

Make faces, sounds, and movements that your baby can copy, then copy the things that your baby does. This is how infants learn to communicate.

Infants need to practice something until they are sure how it works. That's why it's important to do the same thing over and over again with your baby. Make a game out of repeating things. Besides learning about how things work, your baby will learn what to expect of people and situations.

One of the best ways to help infants learn to talk is to read to them or tell stories. Make a habit of reading to your baby every day.

Starting good reading habits at this young age will help your baby continue to learn new things later on.

Developing a close bond with parents and family members is important. It helps infants form positive relationships with others. By letting other people hold and talk with your baby when you are around, your baby learns how to relate to other people. When you cannot be with your baby, it is best if the same trusted people are the caregivers. Your baby will learn to expect and enjoy their company and kindness.



Anxiety, Fears & Phobias

Everyone experiences anxieties and fears at one time or another. The nature of anxieties change as kids grow and develop. Babies experience stranger anxiety, clinging to parents when confronted by people they don't recognize. Toddlers around 10-18 months old experience separation anxiety, becoming distressed when one or both parents leave. Kids age 4 through 6 have anxiety about things that aren't based in reality, such as fears of monsters and ghosts. Kids age 7 through 12 often have fears that reflect real circumstances that may happen to them, such as bodily injury and natural disaster. Adolescents experience anxiety related to social acceptance and academic achievement. As kids grow, one fear may disappear or replace another.



When anxieties persist, problems can arise. If the anxiety looms larger and becomes more prevalent, the anxiety becomes a phobia, a fear that's extreme, severe, and persistent.

Signs of anxiety include:

- Becoming clingy, impulsive, or distracted
- Nervous movements, such as twitches
- Problems getting to sleep or staying asleep longer than usual
- Sweaty hands
- Accelerated heart rate and breathing
- Nausea, stomachaches, headaches

To help your child deal with fears:

Lending a sympathetic ear is always helpful, and sometimes just talking about the fear can help a child move beyond it.

Words often take some of the power out of the negative feeling. If you talk about it, it can become less powerful.

Recognize that the fear is real. As trivial as a fear may seem, it feels real to your child and it's causing him to be anxious. Never belittle the fear as a way of forcing your child to overcome it.

Don't cater to fears. If your child doesn't like dogs, don't cross the street to avoid one. This will just reinforce that dogs should be feared. Provide support as you approach the feared object with your child.

Teach coping strategies. Using you as "home base" the child can venture out toward the feared object, and then return to you for safety before venturing out again. The child can also learn some positive statements such as "I can do this" and "I will be ok" to say to himself when feeling anxious.

Relaxation techniques are helpful, including visualization (of floating on a cloud or lying on a beach for example) and deep breathing (imagining the lungs are balloons and letting them slowly deflate)

If the phobia hinders the child's everyday ability to function, or if the fear seems out of proportion to the cause of the stress, this may signal the need to seek outside help.

Source: Kidshealth.org





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EMPLOYEE Spotlight



Melinda Burns

Many of you know Melinda Burns from her work as a receptionist at our front desk. She started working at Stamford Pediatrics in August 2001. After a few years at the front office Melinda was promoted to the billing department where she works with Lisa to handle all the insurance claims for both of our offices. You can still see Melinda on occasion at the front desk, as she works some Saturdays.

Melinda is married to her wonderful husband, Kevin. She and Kevin are the proud parents of 11-month-olds Zachary and Alyssa. Zachary is quite an adventurous little explorer, always on the move, while Alyssa is a bit more reserved and enjoys taking in everything from her surroundings. While the twins keep Melinda very busy outside of the office, Melinda also enjoys watching movies, baking, and spending time with her family. She especially enjoys long walks with the kids.

Besides being a dedicated and valuable employee we always enjoy her perpetual smile and positive attitude.

We feel very fortunate to have Melinda as part of our professional team at Stamford Pediatric Associates.

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