



Healthy and Nutritious Snacks for Summer

Summer is here and so are many local and healthy foods for you and your family. Summer is a great time to introduce your family to new vegetables or reintroduce them to the ones they already know. The local Farmers Market is a great place to start. A trip to the local Farmers Market can be fun for you and the family, especially the children. Set a healthy example - your children learn from watching you. Eat healthy foods and your kids will, too. At the Farmers Market make sure to stop at all the tables so your children can see the different varieties of local produce. Let them feel the different textures of vegetables. Ask them to name the different colors they see. Have them smell the wonderful scents such as the many herbs they have to choose from. Don't be afraid to ask questions about how to prepare certain vegetables and let the children ask questions too. Have them help you count out the number of apples, tomatoes, cucumbers, etc. Who knew there was so much learning in one place? You can also talk to them about where the food comes from.

Once you're done at the Farmers Market head over to your local library to pick up a great book about farming or vegetables that you and your child can read together. If you are not sure what to pick out, just ask the librarians and they'll find the perfect fit for you. From there you can go home and make a meal from your purchases at the Farmers Market. Let the kids help you cook. Children are more willing to try something that they helped pick out. Even if they are young, let them stir or toss. You can even name your dish after your children, like "Riley's Salad." Then once the meal is prepared, sit down with your family at the table and have a great meal.

Kids do not always take to new foods right away. Offer them many times, and try serving them different ways. When you offer children new foods, let them choose how much to eat. Kids are more likely to enjoy a food when eating it is their own choice. Talk about what you did today and what they remember. Ask them what their favorite part was, and then plan to do it again. Nutrition does not have to be a battle. If you can make it fun, chances are that it will be easier to get them to try new things. If you cannot go to the Farmers Market, your local grocery store is also a great place to shop for healthy foods.

Here are some great activities you can do with your children:

Super Hero Veggies: Choose different types of veggies and cut them into pieces that the children can use to build their super heroes. Use tooth picks to connect the veggies together into a super hero. (Moms, depending on the child's age; you may need to do this for them.) Place the veggies on a plate and watch them build their super hero. Hint: Lettuce makes a great cape. You can also use fruit if available.

Mini-Pizzas: You'll need: whole wheat English muffins; low-fat mozzarella cheese; a mixture of veggies (green peppers, tomatoes, onions, mushrooms, and spinach); 6 oz. tomato sauce with no salt added; ¼ tsp. dried basil; ¼ tsp. dried oregano. Preheat the oven to 400 F. Rinse and peel the onion. Rinse peppers, mushrooms, tomatoes and spinach. Dice the onion, peppers, and tomatoes into ½ inch pieces. Slice the mushrooms ¼ inch thick. Mix the dried basil and dried oregano into the

tomato sauce. Spread a layer of sauce over each muffin. Sprinkle with cheese; add vegetables and place one spinach leaf on each muffin. Bake until pizza is cooked through, about 5-10 minutes. Time varies based on your oven. Let the children put the cheese and veggies on. Have them make a face or other decoration on the pizza.

Apple Wraps: 1 large apple (local apples work great for this); 2 medium, ripe bananas; 2 tbsp. of peanut butter (you can us crunchy if you choose); 2 (8 inch) whole wheat tortillas. Rinse and cut the apple in half, lengthwise. Remove the stem. Cut out center core that contains the seeds. Do not peel. Lay apple halves flat side down. Cut into ¼ inch thick slices. Cut slices into small cubes. Peel bananas. In a medium bowl, use your fingers to break bananas into pieces. Use your fingers or a fork to mash pieces until creamy and smooth. Add peanut butter to mashed banana. Stir well to blend. Spread peanut butter mixture over one side of each tortilla. Sprinkle diced apple over peanut butter. Tightly roll each tortilla. Cut each tortilla in half. Chill in refrigerator until ready to serve, up to 24 hours. Feel free to add any other fruit. Let the children mash the bananas.

Make nutrition fun for you and your family!

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