

## **AN ADVENTURE IN TASTE: EASY, NUTRITIOUS SNACKS FOR TODDLERS**

Various changes occur during a baby's first year. When babies turn six months old, aside from milk, you can start introducing solid foods as part of their daily meals.

Once they get older, snacks become important elements of a toddler's diet. Most toddlers get 25% of their caloric intake from snacking. As such, aside from drinking the [best milk product for brain development](#), it is essential that your toddlers eat snacks that are filling, wholesome, and nutritious. In addition, when you give your tots healthy snacks, you make sure that you give your little ones key nourishments they might not get during their other meals.

### **Healthy and Yummy Snacks for Your Tots**

You can make healthy and tasty snacks for toddlers with just a few ingredients. Here are some easy to make nutritious and delicious snack recipes that your tots will surely love and will help them develop and meet important [eating or feeding skills and milestones](#):

- **Baked carrots and sweet potato fries**

**If your toddler loves deep-fried and fatty French fries, give your child something healthier and tastier – oven-baked carrots and sweet potato fries.**

Cut sweet potatoes and carrots into ½ inch wide strips or the size of a typical French fry and place them on a baking sheet. Sprinkle some olive oil, 2 tablespoons of dried herbs such as powdered garlic and rosemary, and some salt and pepper over the carrots and sweet potatoes to allow your child to explore different tastes. Toss all the ingredients, making sure all the fries are covered with oil, herbs, salt and pepper.

Preheat oven at 400°F. Next, arrange the fries in a single layer and bake them in the preheated oven for 35 to 40 minutes or until they are crispy and golden brown in color. Flip the fries over two or three times to make sure they all brown evenly. You can **serve the fries as is or with your child's favorite dip.**

- **Mini-pizza**

Aside from fries, **toddlers are also naturally drawn to pizza.** You can make a more nutritious version of this snack at home with some simple ingredients.

Toast half an English muffin, a slice of baguette or French bread and spread a tablespoon of marinara or homemade spiced tomato sauce on it. Top the bread with some chopped vegetables such as bell pepper, onions, and mushrooms, shredded cheese, and some small slices of chicken or turkey and broil in the oven until the cheese melts.

To make it more fun and interesting for toddlers, **have them choose which toppings to put and assist them with assembling their mini-pizzas themselves.** They'll be more excited to eat something that they made with their own hands.

- **Quinoa-coated chicken nuggets**

**Quinoa is naturally packed with vitamins, minerals, and other nutrients.** You can make chicken nuggets (a favorite snack among kids of all ages) healthier when you use quinoa instead of breadcrumbs as the coating.

Combine half a cup of flour, salt, and pepper in a bowl. In another bowl, whisk three eggs and two tablespoons of water. Put two cups of cooked quinoa in another bowl.

Cut boneless and skinless chicken breasts into bite sizes and dredge them in the flour mixture, eggs, and then in the quinoa. Make sure each piece is coated evenly.

Place the nuggets on a baking sheet and bake in a preheated oven (450°F) for 15 to 20 minutes or until they are golden brown. Since kids love dipping their food, prepare an assortment of dips such as ketchup, cheese, etc.

- **Bread, fresh fruits, and veggies with dips**

If you want your child to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables, **slice some apples, pears, turnips, and carrots and other produce and simply serve them with some dip.** Strawberries and apple slices go well with creamy yogurt. Carrots, celery, and turnips taste better when dipped in hummus or cottage cheese.

You can also give your toddler some wedges of whole grain pita bread and have him or her dip them in hummus, guacamole, or spinach dip. If you have some pretzels or whole grain crackers, serve them with some sweet and savory mustard or simple cheese dip.

- **Parfait**

Another way you can get your little ones to double their intake of fresh, nutritious fruits is to make or have them **create their own parfaits.**

Prepare a variety of chopped or sliced fruits such as mangoes, peaches, avocados, melons, and bananas. Add an assortment of berries as well. Layer a small bowl or dessert glass with one-third cup of yogurt or low-fat vanilla ice cream, one-quarter cup of chopped fruit and some berries. Sprinkle a little granola on the top.

It is best to allow your child to help you with the prep and actual assembly or assist him or her to make the parfait. To make this snack fun for your kids, **transform your kitchen table into a parfait bar.**

- **Fruit pops**

These easy-to-make frozen treats are **great for snacks and even for dessert.**

Use a juicer to get fresh fruit juice and add honey and/or milk for additional flavor. Place the juice in the container and add some chopped fresh fruits such as orange, pineapple, peaches, or berries for extra flavor and texture. Next, place them in the freezer. You can also freeze some leftover smoothies since they taste great as frozen pops, too.

As the parent of a toddler, don't forget to make snack times interactive. You can do this by giving toddlers snacks with dips or foods that they can prepare or create on their own.

Also, always get your toddlers involved in planning, preparing, cooking, and serving their snacks. Your child will be more interested in eating the foods they helped prepare and cook and this will help them learn to appreciate eating whole foods or meals in the future.