

# Back-to-School Super Snacks

This week is **back-to-school** for my grade school kiddos. One was excited to go back, the other not so much. I, on the other hand, am experiencing a whole range of emotions, including a wee bit of indigestion thinking about how to fit homework, snack, soccer practice and dinner all in before a reasonable bedtime on 4-5 school nights.

For me, dinner is all about planning, menu rotations and handy appliances (yes, I'm talking about you, slow cooker, Instant Pot and my new favorite, the Air Fryer). And although it won't always be pretty, a fairly well-rounded and nutritious dinner will be served. The more stressful repast, I think, is the (cue *Jaws* theme song)... **AFTERNOON SNACK.**

No matter what or when my kids ate lunch, they are completely **RAVENOUS** when they walk in the door. And, this isn't a bad thing... famished children can turn snack time into a golden opportunity to sneak in some extra nutrients. And, hungry little hippos may be more willing to try nutritious foods that they may not be as willing to try at meal time. The key is to have some easy-to-eat **HEALTHY** snacks on hand and ready to go... **QUICKLY.**

Serving back-to-school super snacks is very simple. Just keep these **TWO P's** in mind when planning snacks...

1. **Protein** – Like meals, snacks should consist of a **complex or high-fiber carbohydrate PLUS lean or heart-healthy protein** (think fruit, vegetables or whole grains PLUS fish, beans, edamame, eggs, turkey, low-fat dairy and nuts or seeds). **Carbohydrates provide the fuel** (and those complex or high-fiber carbohydrates provide dietary fiber and lots of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants). **Protein provides the staying power**, to help tide us over for a couple of hours until dinner.

2. **Portion sizes** – Just remember... a snack is a snack, not a meal. The goal is to keep little tummies powered for sports practice, band practice or that homework marathon without filling them up. Aim for snacks that provide about 100-150 calories for younger children, a little more for children playing sports and older kids (200-250 calories).

Here are some [snack ideas](#) that my kids love.

### **Fruit Nachos**

1/4-1/3 cup plain nonfat yogurt  
1 tsp. honey  
1/2 tsp. cinnamon  
1 apple, cored and sliced  
1/2 Tbsp. chia seeds

*Choice of toppings:* blueberries, diced strawberries, low-fat granola, shredded unsweetened coconut, sunflower or pumpkin seeds, mini chocolate chips



In a baggie, add yogurt, honey and cinnamon; squeeze bag gently to mix ingredients together (this is a great task for kids to do!). Place apple slices on a plate. Cut small hole in corner of baggie, and drizzle yogurt on top of apples. Sprinkle with chia seeds and desired toppings. Make 2 servings.

### **Twisted Tuna Pinwheels**

1 whole grain tortilla  
1 avocado, mashed with fork  
1 pouch or can of chunk light tuna  
1/4 cup shredded carrot  
1/2 yellow or red bell pepper, diced or thinly sliced



Mash avocado on top of tortilla. Evenly distribute tuna, carrot and bell pepper on top of mashed avocado. Tightly roll tortilla, leaving ends open. Slice into 1-inch thick slices. Makes 2 servings.

### **Popcorn 2 Ways: Savory or Sweet**

6 cups air-popped popcorn  
1/2 tsp canola or coconut oil



*Sweet toppings:* Cinnamon, brown sugar, mini or dark chocolate chips, mixed dried fruit, cinnamon-flavored crunchy chickpeas, sunflower seeds

*Savory toppings:* Parmesan or powder cheddar cheese, nutritional yeast, whole grain cereal, pretzels, sea salt crunchy chickpeas, hemp seeds

In a large bowl, drizzle oil evenly over popcorn. Top with your favorite sweet or savory (or a mix of both!) toppings. Makes 2 servings.

**PLEASE SHARE:** What are your favorite after-school snacks?  
Please share. I'd love to hear from you!

*This post first appeared on [KleinerNutrition.com](http://KleinerNutrition.com) on August 28, 2015.*