



Healthy and Fun Holiday Treats



Healthy snacks fit into the MyPlate food groups and include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein and low-fat dairy. Children may get a sizable portion of their daily nutrients from snacks, so the content of the snacks should contribute to their MyPlate recommendations. Check out choosemyplate.gov for more information. Here are some ideas to help you create healthy holiday snacks:

- Use whole grain cereals to make cereal treats. Then make holiday shapes such as turkeys or holiday trees.
- Serve a healthy trail mix made of peanuts, pretzels and whole grain cereals or crackers in an individual bag or cup decorated with fun holiday cutouts instead of cookies or candies.
- Use whole grain flour when making cutout cookies, and decorate with a light, colorful glaze.
- Serve an oatmeal cookie on a plate surrounded by thin slices of red and green apples fanned out like turkey feathers. Use raisins for the eyes and cheese pieces for the feet and bill.
- Serve fun snacks like apple smiles made from apple slices, peanut butter, and miniature marshmallows, or ants on a log made from celery, peanut butter, and raisins. They aren't necessarily holiday themed, but they are fun any time of the year.
- Choose holiday cookie recipes that include fruits such as dried cranberries, dates, or raisins.
- Serve hot chocolate made from scratch with fat free or low fat milk. Here is an easy recipe from North Dakota Extension: <http://go.unl.edu/hf9q>. Or, if choosing instant hot chocolate powder, choose ones with less sugar and added calcium.

Whole Grain Holiday Treats

- 2 cups crispy rice cereal
- 2 cups quick cooking oats
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup firmly packed brown sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup light corn syrup
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup peanut butter
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup raisins or dried cranberries
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup dark chocolate chips

1. Combine cereal and oats in a large bowl and set aside. Bring brown sugar and syrup to a boil in a saucepan over medium high heat, stirring constantly until sugar is dissolved.
2. Remove from heat and stir in peanut butter and vanilla. Pour peanut butter mixture over cereal, stirring until coated. Let stand 5 minutes. Stir in raisins and chips. Make into holiday shapes, or press into 9 x 13 pan. Makes 24 servings. Each serving contains 130 calories, 4.5 grams fat, 40 mg sodium 21 g carbohydrate and 1 gram fiber.



Additional Resources:

1. UNL's Nutrition Education Program, Healthy Holidays: <http://go.unl.edu/7bed>
2. Georgia Jones, PhD, Discover Foods Blog, Sweet Potato Pudding: <http://go.unl.edu/ujuw>

Check out more Food Fun for Young Children Newsletters: <http://go.unl.edu/chi>