



Spring Contrasts

Spring is a time for contrasts. It can be bitterly cold one day, and the next, a beautiful spring day. Plants go from being dormant to green and growing overnight. Some spring days are rainy, while others are dry. It is an enjoyable time to help your child understand what makes things contrasting.

A terrific way for them to learn is to have them try different “contrasting” snacks. Think of pairing foods that are salty and sweet, smooth and crunchy, dark and light colored, hot and cold, or maybe even different shapes. Enjoy family time together creating these contrasting snacks:

- Salty pretzels dipped in sweet yogurt
- Hot cocoa with frozen banana slices
- Layer red strawberries with vanilla yogurt for a contrasting parfait
- Various shaped cereal mixed together (circles or squares)

Contrast Snack Mix

- 2 cups crunchy oat cereal (circle shaped)
- ½ cup sweet and chewy raisins or dried cranberries
- ½ cup other dried fruit like blueberries or cherries
- 1 cup small square crackers
- ½ cup candy coated dark chocolate pieces or chocolate chips (optional)

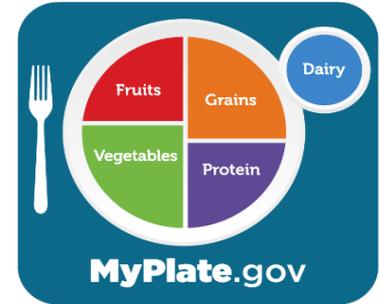


1. Wash hands with soap and water.
2. Mix together and store in an air tight container or put ½ cup portions into zip top bags. Makes 8 servings. Each serving contains 130 calories, 2.5g fat, 95mg sodium, 26g carbohydrate, 15g sugar, 2.4g fiber and 2g protein.

Note: Peanuts, almonds or other nuts would also be great additions to this snack mix if serving to children older than 4 years of age who are at less risk of choking. Article originally written by Nancy Frecks – updated in 2025.

Sources:

1. Preschoolers: United States Department of Agriculture: <https://www.myplate.gov/life-stages/preschoolers>
2. Reducing the Risk of Choking in Young Children at Mealtimes: United States Department Agriculture: <https://bit.ly/3V0n9Cx>



Choking Hazards

Children under 4 years of age are at the greatest risk of choking. Certain foods are easy for your young child to choke on when swallowing them. These include foods that are round and about the size of the throat –about the size of a nickel. Prevent choking by avoiding these foods or cutting them in small pieces--no larger than one-half inch (½”).

Examples include:

- Peanuts
- Popcorn and chips
- Round slices of hotdogs or sausages
- Carrot sticks or baby carrots

Additional tips:

- Have your child eat at the table. Do not let your child run, walk, play, or lie down with food in their mouth.
- Keep a watchful eye on your child while he or she eats.
- Encourage children to eat slowly.