



THE OFFICIAL NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF PEDIATRICS

# AAP News

Volume 35 • Number 9  
September 2014  
[www.aapnews.org](http://www.aapnews.org)

## AAP News Parent Plus

INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

### Give your children a lesson in smart snacking

It may not be Jan. 1, but why not make a new school year resolution for your family to eat healthier snacks?

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) urges parents and communities to support healthy, nutritious foods to help prevent children from becoming overweight or obese.

Schools also will begin making changes this school year to provide healthier snack options for students. Food offered for sale in vending machines, school stores and a la carte in lunch lines will meet some of the same health and nutrition standards that national school lunches follow. For example, many of the snacks will contain whole grains, be lower in sodium, fat and calories, and focus on smart portions.

Think that lunches and snacks from home are healthier? A recent study found that many of the snacks children brought from home did not meet recommended dietary guidelines and were high in calories, fat, salt and sugar.

The AAP encourages parents to teach children to make healthy choices for snacks and meals at home and school. This can help prevent children from becoming overweight. Overweight or obese children are more likely to have long-term health problems such as diabetes, asthma, heart disease and sleep problems. They also are more likely to suffer from social and psychological problems.

Teach children to pay attention to how much sodium, fat and sugar are in their snacks. Look for snacks with less than 200 milligrams of sodium, less than 200 calories and that have little or no fat and sugar.

Examples of healthy snacks include:

- Fresh or packaged (with no added sugars) fruits and vegetables like carrots, celery, apples, bananas, cherries, raisins, dried apricots and fruit cups packed in juice or water.
- Whole grains, such as whole-grain cereals or breads and low-fat, low-salt whole-grain crackers or chips.
- Fat-free or low-fat milk and milk products (including lactose-free milk and soy-based beverages).
- 100% fruit juice (4 ounces for elementary students; 8 ounces for middle/high school students).
- Eight-ounce servings of low-fat or fat-free fruit-flavored yogurt with no more than 30 grams of sugar.

More information about children's nutrition is available in English and Spanish on the AAP website for parents, [HealthyChildren.org](http://HealthyChildren.org).

— Trisha Koriath



©2014 American Academy of Pediatrics. This Parent Plus may be freely copied and distributed with proper attribution.