



Growing Together: Food, Family and Friends

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This month's newsletter features...

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EAT

After school, kids and teens may need a snack – as in right away! Developing bodies and brains need nourishing food to fuel growth and learning.

While opening a bag of chips may be a quick solution to the hunger pangs, consider providing healthier options for them with just a little effort. Make the healthy choice the easy choice!

In the Refrigerator

Consider setting up a “snack station” with perishable food in containers.

- String cheese
- Yogurt cups or tubes of yogurt
- Single servings of hummus
- Single servings of applesauce or other canned fruit
- Carrot sticks
- Apple slices
- Melon chunks
- Pea pods
- Grapes

On the Counter

Set up a snack buffet with the ingredients in small containers, along with spoons or tongs and small bags or bowls for the children to create their own snack mix.

- Cereal or granola
- Nuts (if no nut allergies are present)
- Crackers
- Pretzel sticks or twists
- Dried fruit (raisins, cranberries)
- Popped popcorn

For school-age children, see **“Now You’re Cookin’: Nutritious After-school Snacks”** for tips and recipes.

For preschoolers, see **“Now You’re Cookin’: Nutritious Snacks for Preschoolers”** for ideas.



This snack is easy to make ahead and freeze. Children can easily help with this snack.

Yogurt Grahams

- 1 graham cracker (large rectangle)
- 2 Tbsp. low-fat fruit-flavored yogurt

1. Break graham cracker in half. Spread yogurt on one half and top with the other.



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2. Wrap in plastic wrap and freeze.

Makes one serving, with 80 calories, 2 grams (g) fat, 2 g protein, 14 g carbohydrate, 9 g fiber and 85 milligrams sodium.

Connect

Stepping into Fall with Routines That Work

“Where are my shoes?” “Dad, you forgot to sign the permission slip!” “Hurry up — the bus is coming!”

If these phrases sound familiar, your home may be due for a routine refresh. Routines help both kids and adults know what to expect, reduce stress and support emotional regulation. They also create secure environments that promote healthy brain development.

When tasks become automatic, kids can focus their mental energy on learning and problem-solving. Repetition builds strong brains, and routines provide the consistency needed for that growth.

Tips for Building Better Routines:

- Start small: Pick one area that causes the most stress — like mornings — and focus there. Could prepping breakfast the night before help? Would adding hooks or bins by the door cut down on last-minute chaos?
- Get everyone involved: Hold a quick family meeting. Ask each person what routines might help. Your kindergartner might need an earlier bedtime, while your teen may want quicker, high-protein breakfast options.
- Be consistent: Habits take time — about 28 days to stick. Don't give up too soon!

With a little planning and teamwork, your family can head into fall feeling more organized and less overwhelmed.

Want to refresh your parenting skills as well? Check out our great fall offerings! [NDSU.ag/parenteducation](https://www.ndsu.edu/parenteducation)



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Savor the Savings

Supplies for extracurricular activities can get expensive. From sports equipment to musical instruments, shopping for equipment can put a dent in the family budget.

Consider shopping at a secondhand store. Check whether swap programs are available at a dance studio. Check out the costs of renting vs. purchasing, or ask friends on social media if they have a trumpet or skates, for example, in their storage area.

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