

Oreos are not the answer...

When it comes to preparing snacks for children taste, packaging, convenience and nutritional content seem to be at the top of the list. Even if a child is a picky eater or has a profound sweet tooth, there are options (besides Oreos) to satisfy them too. Most of the time a few minor changes, such as portions and choosing healthier ingredients, can change what children are eating from a regular snack to one packed with vitamins and nutrients.

Case Study: Peanut Butter and Jelly.

Two white slices of bread, peanut butter and fruit jelly, but how nutritious is it? According to Nutrition.About.com a PB&J sandwich can contain:

- Fat: 18 grams
- Sodium: 500 milligrams
- Carbohydrates: 59 grams
- Protein: 12 grams
- Fiber: 3 grams
- Calories: 432

This is based on the serving portions on the label—such as only one tablespoon of PB, if we put more than that, the calories increase. These numbers might not seem like much but our sandwich uses up almost a quarter of our daily allowance of carbohydrates, as well as almost a quarter of our daily allowances of calories, fats and sodium. Maybe not so bad, but this is only a snack and we still have three *meals* to go.

Easy ways to transform this sandwich into a more healthy and nutritious snack are to use low-fat PB, use fruit spread (only fruit and juice, no sugar) instead of jelly, use whole grain bread instead of white and make smaller portions.

Other quick, easy to make and easy to transport snack ideas include:

- ✓ Veggie sticks (carrots, celery, peppers, etc.) with hummus
- ✓ Raisin and nut mixes
- ✓ Sweet potato chips instead of regular potato chips
- ✓ Fresh fruits
- ✓ Low fat cheese with whole grain crackers
- ✓ Low fat yogurt
- ✓ Smoothies (with low-fat yogurt and fresh or frozen fruits)
- ✓ Whole grain/high fiber cereals

A quick internet search can provide even more ideas and information about healthy snack options for you and your child. Listed below are some websites you may find helpful, a copy of the food pyramid, as well as two snack recipes that you and your child might enjoy making together. Bon Appetit!

Websites:

- **Healthiergeneration.org**
- Kidica.com
- Parentcenter.com
- Momscape.com

Recipes:

Ants on a log

Ingredients:

- Peanut butter—or other nut butter such as almond.
- Celery stalks
- Raisins

Directions: Spread nut butter along the inside of celery sticks. Place raisins on top of nut butter and serve. Try different types of dried fruits such as cranberries or apple bits for a twist.

Apple Oatmeal Cookies

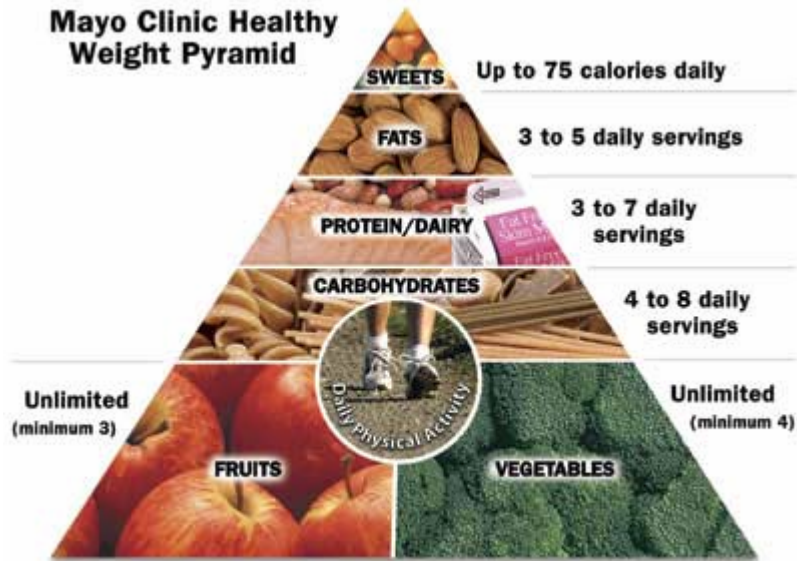
Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup margarine, softened
- 1/2 cup honey
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3/4 cup stone ground whole wheat flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1 1/2 cups quick-cooking oats
- 1 apple, cored and chopped

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C). Grease cookie sheets.
2. In a large bowl, cream together the margarine, honey, egg and vanilla until smooth. Combine the whole wheat flour, baking soda and cinnamon; stir into the creamed mixture. Mix in oats and apple. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto the prepared cookie sheets.
3. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes in the preheated oven. Allow cookies to cool on baking sheet for 5 minutes before removing to a wire rack to cool completely.

Mayo Clinic Healthy Weight Pyramid



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