

It's All About Balance: Eat Smart, Move More, Rest Well

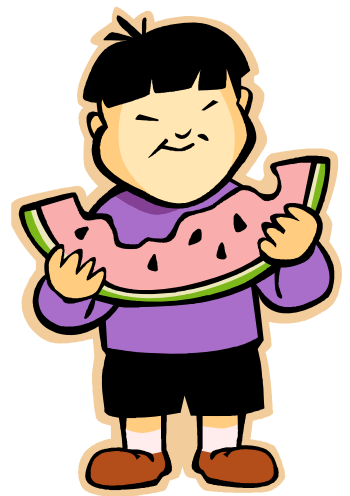
4 Easy Ways to Enjoy Tasty & Healthy Party Treats

Match bright colors to the celebration.

“Eat your colors” is awesome advice for good health, great taste and party fun. Fruits and vegetables come in all colors. Try green spring veggies with Ranch dip for St. Patrick’s Day. Look for produce that matches a school mascot (orange slices and blueberries). Think of a child’s favorite colors (red + green = strawberries + kiwi kebobs on a plastic straw). Mix bright-colored juice (pomegranate or blueberry) with seltzer water instead of sweet tea.

Enjoy smaller portions of usual treats.

For most healthy children, there is always room for kid-size portions of desserts and other higher fat, higher sugar foods. The trick is to start with lots of nutrient-rich options. Serve sandwiches, crackers and cheese, veggies with dip, or slices of sweet fruit. Then include small cupcakes, mini-candies or bite-size cookies. Serve chips, nuts and other salty snacks in small cups rather than huge bowls.



Feature fun shapes of everyday foods.

When it comes to special occasions, cookie cutters are a cook’s best friend. You can cut sandwiches into lots of fun shapes that kids like. Use hearts at Valentine’s, bunnies for Easter, pumpkins for Halloween or trees at Christmas. Other foods can easily be cut into fun shapes too. Cut ghosts from white and yellow cheese slices. Try small gingerbread people cut from fruit slices (apples, pears or watermelon). All it takes is a few inexpensive cookie cutters and a tiny bit of creativity.

Make silly faces with a variety of foods.

This theme has lots of variations, because kids (of all ages) love to play with their food. Start with a bread slice, a rice cake, crackers or pre-made pizza crust. Spread on a little peanut butter, light cream cheese or pizza sauce. Then everyone creates faces using pre-cut foods. Use shredded cheese, spaghetti or pretzel sticks for hair. Grapes or cucumber slices work for eyes. Carrots or pickles make a great nose with sliced oranges or apples for a mouth.

Need some creative ideas for your next party? Check out *Family Fun Magazine* for easy, low-cost ideas. Find it at <http://familyfun.go.com/>. The site has party ideas and recipes (many of them are easy and healthy). It also has a free newsletter. For ideas, check out the USDA’s new resource, *Create Healthy, Active Celebrations*, at www.fns.usda.gov/eatsmartplayhardhealthylifestyle/QuickandEasy/celebrations.pdf.



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