

Nutrition Guidelines for Holidays and Celebrations

Holiday and Celebration Guidelines for School Age Children

Children this age have been through quite a few holidays and have participated in many celebrations. Because most have probably involved food, getting children to make the switch to healthier celebrations may be a bit more challenging. Make changes slowly and use them to explain why celebrating healthy is so important.

Center approved celebration foods meeting nutrition guidelines:

- Fresh or frozen fruits*. Examples may include:
 - Banana
 - Pear
 - Apples or unsweetened applesauce
 - Kiwi
 - Cantaloupe, honeydew or watermelon
 - Mango or papaya
 - Berries
 - Peaches
- Fresh or frozen vegetables*. Examples may include:
 - Carrot or celery sticks
 - Sweet potato chips (cut into thin slices, coat with cooking spray and bake)
 - Green bean fries (coat with cooking spray, bake until crunchy)
 - Broccoli or cauliflower with low-fat dip
- Whole grain crackers (low sodium only)
- Graham crackers
- Cheese cubes or string cheese
- Low fat yogurt cups
- Water, 1% or skim milk, or 100% fruit juice.



***Look for in-season fruits and vegetables for cheaper options.**

Tips for staff:

- For general classrooms celebrations, work with the children to create a sign-up sheet that includes only approved and healthy foods. Parents can sign up for one if they like.
- Distribute your holiday and celebration policy prior to each event as a gentle reminder. Encourage children and families to share healthy foods from their family culture and traditions.
- Discuss traditional holidays in ways that includes more than food.
- Celebrate in a new ways, such as with a pajama party, planting flowers, art project or a “read-in.”
- Limit sugar consumption by allowing only one sweet treat with other healthier options.

Tips for parents:

- Make a piñata for the class and fill it with small favors or 100 calorie snack packs instead of candy.
- If you decide to bring favors for birthdays or small gifts for holidays include sunglasses, a deck of cards, or a plastic figurine instead of sweets.

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Holiday and Celebration Guidelines for 6-12 years (...Continued)

Better Choices for Birthdays:

- Mini cupcakes or muffins
- Small oatmeal cookies or whole fig cookies
- Prepare your child's favorite dish and bring snack-size portions for the class.
- Fruit smoothies (blend fresh or frozen fruit, yogurt, and milk)
- Birthday kabobs (use a straw instead of a sharp stick): bananas, grape halves, melon chunks and berries. 100% fruit juice freezer pops
- If you and your child love chocolate, be sure to try making these yummy (and healthy) Chocolate Surprise Cupcakes:

Fruity Pudding Parfait (Serves 4)

- 1 cup fat-free vanilla pudding
- 1 cup fat-free chocolate pudding
(Pudding mix and fat-free milk)
- 2 bananas, sliced
- 2 cups strawberries (fresh or frozen)
- Low fat non-dairy whipped topping

Directions

- ◆ Prepare the pudding mixes with fat-free milk.
- ◆ In a tall, clear 10-ounce plastic cup, layer the puddings, fruit and whipped topping.
- ◆ Top with a piece of your child's favorite fruit!

Nutrition Information per serving:

Calories	175
Protein	5 grams
Carbohydrate	40 grams
Cholesterol	2 milligrams
Fiber	2 grams
Sodium	215 milligrams