

Nutrition Tips and Menu ideas for Healthy Summer Meals

The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) was established to ensure that low-income children continue to receive nutritious meals when school is not in session. Free meals, that meet Federal nutrition guidelines, are provided to all children 18 years old and under at approved SFSP sites in areas with many low-income children.

Because it is important that children receive healthy meals all year, including in the summer, here are some tips you can use to make SFSP meals healthier. While not required, these tips can go a long way in creating healthy habits for kids:

Go for whole grains

- Offer breads and cereals that contain whole grains.
- Choose those that have “whole” in the name of the first ingredient (e.g., whole wheat, whole oats, whole rice).

Offer a rainbow of colors

- Include dark green, orange, yellow, red, and purple vegetables and fruits.
- Try for different colors every day!

Choose lower-fat options

- Serve only low-fat (1%) or fat-free (skim) milk.
- Serve lean cuts of meats, or serve fish, nuts, or beans instead.
- Limit or avoid fried and prefried foods. Instead, offer baked, broiled, or grilled vegetables, chicken, and fish.

Use unsweetened or naturally sweetened foods

- Serve fresh, frozen, or canned fruit (no sugar added) instead of fruit juice or fruit-based desserts.
- Use fruit to sweeten plain yogurt.
- Serve unflavored milk.

Avoid excess sodium

- Limit or avoid processed meats.
- Choose less-processed options, like rolled whole turkey breast instead of lunch meat or baked fish instead of fish sticks.
- Choose fresh or frozen vegetables. When using canned vegetables with added salt, rinse them first.



Here are some menu ideas to get you started

Sample breakfast:

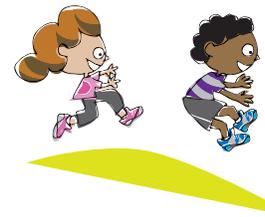
- Whole-grain cereal
- Non-fat milk
- Fresh or frozen blueberries (no sugar added)

Sample lunch or supper:

- Southwest chicken wrap (whole wheat wrap, chicken, lettuce, and salsa)
- Refried beans (no added fat)
- Pineapple chunks (no added sugar)
- Non-fat milk

Sample snack:

- Red and yellow bell pepper strips
- Hummus
- Water



USDA Resources

For more ways on serving healthier SFSP meals that kids will enjoy, check out these resources:

- **Nutrition Guidance Handbook for Sponsors**
<http://www.fns.usda.gov/cnd/summer/library/HandBooks/NutritionGuide.pdf>
- **Recipes for Healthy Kids**
http://teammnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/recipes_for_healthy_kids.html
- **Recipes for all Child Nutrition Professionals**
<http://healthymeals.nal.usda.gov/recipes/recipes-all-child-nutrition-professionals>