

QSSB Health and Nutrition Outreach

June 2024 Article

Tips For Summer Routines and Snacking with Nutrient-Dense Soy Foods

By: Sarah Schlichter, MPH, RDN

With summer in full swing, you may find yourself ready for travel excursions and afternoons by the pool. While these activities can be exciting, they can also be exhausting when catering to kids' endless snack requests. Feeding kids (and yourself!) during the summer months may look different than during the school year for several reasons.

First, the daily routine changes. This can mean that set mealtimes may vary since kids insist on snacking all day long. Furthermore, the hot summer months may lend themselves to cooler, refreshing food options, like smoothies, cold salads, no-bake snacks and more.

Despite these changes in mealtimes and routines, you still want your kids to eat a healthy diet and get the nutrients they need. We have some tips to handle the unpredictability that the summer months can bring, as well as some nutrient-rich snack and meal options for the family.

Tips for managing kids' nutrition in the summer months:

- Implement some predictability – While summer meals and snacks can look different, offering breakfast, lunch, and dinner with snacks in between (or following your normal timeline of eating) provides some much-needed consistency for kids and grownups alike.
- Pack snacks ahead of time – Whether you're heading to the pool, a friend's house, or the park, have some pre-made nutritious snacks, like trail mix or a smoothie, to ensure your kids have nutrient-dense options to rely on.
- Snack on soy foods yourself – Since kids often model parents and role models, show kids that you enjoy soy-rich foods and snacks to help entice them to eat them as well. If soy foods are newer to kids, pair them with some familiar favorites, like fruits, vegetables, grains, oatmeal bites, nuts, and seeds.

Offering soy-based foods can be a fantastic way to increase nutrition in children. Soy is a high-quality complete protein that also offers a slew of other important nutrients for children, such as [fiber](#), iron, essential fatty acids, Vitamin K1, folate, potassium and antioxidants (1). Soy is also a uniquely rich source of isoflavones, which are bioactive plant compounds that offer several health benefits (2).

Based on clinical and epidemiologic research, a recommendation for preschoolers and school-aged children is to consume 5-10 grams of soy protein/day, equating to approximately 1 serving of a traditional soy food (1).

Here are some fun and easy ways to incorporate soy foods into your summer menu:

- Pack edamame as an on-the-go snack for the pool or car (or create a delicious trail mix with roasted edamame paired with cereal, nuts, and raisins)
- Use soymilk for overnight oats or chia pudding to start the day
- Use soynut butter as a topping for toast or fruit
- Add soymilk to smoothies, cereals, oatmeal, muffins, baked goods and more
- Add tofu to stir fries
- Blend tofu into smoothies and popsicles to increase the protein and nutrient content
- Swap or pair grilled tempeh for bacon in sandwiches and salads
- Add silken tofu to brownies and baked goods, or make a protein-rich dip for chips and veggies
- Mix diced tofu in with scrambled eggs, or replace the eggs with tofu entirely

References:

1. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/28838083/>
2. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33390391/>