Healthy snacks play an important role in helping meet children’s nutritional requirements for growth and development. Try to think of snacks as smaller versions of healthy meals.

Often pre-packaged snack food can be low in dietary fibre and nutrients, and high in saturated fat, added sugar and salt. This is often the case with convenience food such as potato chips, biscuits, cakes and some muesli bars. These convenience foods are also more expensive than food prepared at home.

Food for snacks should be chosen from one or more of the five core food groups. This will ensure your child receives all the nutrients they need for growth, to fuel activity, to keep their bodies healthy and to keep their brains focussed. For children 4 – 8 years, aim to include 1 – 2 snacks in their lunch box and base portion sizes on your child’s individual needs and activity levels.

Here are some easy to prepare healthy snack ideas to serve at home or put in your child’s lunchbox.

**Grain (cereal) foods, mostly wholegrain**
- Raisin bread/toast
- Home-made pizza on half an English muffin
- Plain air-popped popcorn
- Rice cakes/wholegrain crackers with hommus/avocado and tomato/peanut paste*/ reduced fat cheese
- Half an English muffin/1 slice grain toast with peanut paste* and banana
- Small reduced fat muffins/pikelets/scones (savoury or fruit) – look for recipes that use wholemeal flour or added oats/bran

**Lean meats and poultry, fish, eggs, tofu and seeds, and legumes/beans**
- Boiled egg and grain/wholemeal toast soldiers
- Handful of raw nuts*
- Canned tuna/shredded chicken and wholegrain crackers

**Vegetables and legumes/beans**
- Corn on the cob
- Celery/carrot/cucumber sticks/snow peas/celery sticks with reduced fat cheese spread/salsa/hommus/peanut paste*
- Vegetable kebabs – cherry tomatoes, cucumber, celery, capsicum, lean ham and cheese
- Vegetable fritters
- Tomato and reduced fat cheese open grill
- Jaffle with baked beans

**Fruit**
- Fresh whole fruit (apple, apricot, banana, kiwi fruit, orange, pear, plum)
- Fruit kebabs – bananas, watermelon, strawberries
- Tinned fruit in natural juice
- Home-made ice-blocks made with fruit or fruit and reduced fat yoghurt

**Milk, yoghurt, cheese and/or alternatives, mostly reduced fat**
- Glass of reduced fat milk
- Tub of reduced fat yoghurt
- Reduced fat cheese cubes with cherry tomatoes or on wholegrain toast/crackers
- Frozen reduced fat yoghurt

*Nuts need to be avoided if children have a nut allergy or if they are going to eat the snack in a setting where there is a nut free policy.