

# Cafeteria Connection

March 2025

## Smart Snacking



Snacks are a great way to keep our bodies nourished throughout the day, but it's important that we choose smart snacks. Smart snacks are healthy snacks that are low in fat, sugar, and salt, but high in fiber and protein. Being a smart snacker means choosing a snack that will keep you nourished until your next meal while also giving your body the nutrients it needs. Some examples of snack ideas could be trail mix, yogurt with fruit slices, roasted chickpeas, celery sticks with low-fat ranch dressing, popcorn, and baked tortilla chips with salsa.

Did you know that the snacks we offer at your school are smart snack compliant by following the USDA's nutrition standards? For a snack to qualify as a smart snack, it must have a fruit, a vegetable, a dairy product, or a protein food as the first ingredient. It could also be a combination food that contains at least 1/4 cup of fruit and/or vegetable. If it's a grain product, it has to contain at least 50% of whole grains. The amount of calories, saturated fat, trans fat, sugar, and sodium are also compliant with the standards. A tool called the Smart Snacks Calculator can be used to determine whether or not a product meets school nutrition standards.

**CLICK HERE FOR SMART SNACKS CALCULATOR:**  
<https://foodplanner.healthiergeneration.org/calculator/>

To avoid becoming hungry in between meals, remember to pack snacks. The best time to eat a snack are a few hours after a meal ends and approximately 1-2 hours before the next meal.



## Dietitian's Pick

Kale is a vegetable that grows well in colder temperatures and can withstand frost. It is considered a superfood because it is packed with nutrients and vitamins. Kale is rich in Vitamin A which is important for eye function and it also helps the heart, lungs and kidneys stay healthy. It is also rich in vitamin C which protects us from disease and keeps cells healthy, calcium which helps our body build strong bones and vitamin K which helps blood clot & boosts bone density.

## Kale - Strawberry Salad

Serves 6 - 8

### INGREDIENTS:

- 1 lb. Kale (approx. 3/4-1 bunch)\*
- 1/2 cup Vegetable or Olive Oil
- 1/2 cup Strawberries, sliced
- 1/4 cup Lemon Juice

- 1 tablespoon Honey or Sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon Salt
- 1/2 teaspoon Pepper (Add more if you like!)
- \* If using "ready to use" bagged Kale: Approx. 6 oz.

### INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Wash kale & dry thoroughly.
2. Cut kale along sides of stem. Remove stems so you're only left with leaves.
3. Stack leaves & roll them up tightly lengthwise to resemble a tube shape. Cut across the top of the tube into very thin strips.
4. Add 1/4 cup of oil to kale. Massage oil into kale for 2 minutes.
5. Add strawberries to kale.
6. Mix together remaining oil, lemon juice, honey or sugar, salt & pepper for dressing.
7. Add dressing to kale. Mix. Refrigerate for 1 hour.



## March Holidays

### National Nutrition Month

March 1	National Nutrition Day
March 2	Dr. Seuss Birthday, Read Across America
March 3-7	National School Breakfast Week
March 4	National Snack Day
March 3	National Cold Cuts Day
March 5	Ash Wednesday
March 7	National Cereal Day
March 9	National Meatball Day
March 9	Daylight Savings Time
March 11	National Johnny Appleseed Day
March 12	National Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Day
March 14	National Pi Day
March 17	Saint Patrick's Day
March 18	National Sloppy Joe Day
March 19	Saint Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary
March 19	National Poultry Day
March 20	Spring Begins
March 20	National Ravioli Day
March 24	National Cheesesteak Day
March 25	The Annunciation of the Lord
March 26	National Spinach Day

## Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Day

In March, we celebrate National Nutrition Month. March 12th is registered dietitian nutritionist day. Let's explore what a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) is and what they do. A dietitian is a health professional who specializes in nutrition and diet. Dietitians can be found working in various fields such as working for hospitals where they are a member of the healthcare team, they can work for food manufacturers in product development where they help develop recipes and ensure products meet nutritional standards. They can also be found working in private practices with patients of all ages and needs. They are able to provide dietary advice for a balanced diet, as well as nutrition counseling to help patients lose or gain weight.

Dietitians also have a huge role in the education industry. They plan school meals that follow specific nutrition standards. Each meal has to have an offering of fruits, vegetables, grains, meat or meat alternate and milk. In addition to balancing food items, they also ensure compliance with following a range of calories, sodium and sugar limits. This ensures that students are eating healthy, balanced meals at school. Next time you have a nutrition-related question, don't hesitate to ask your dietitian!