



# Traveling with kids: What to eat

We eat the food that is available to us in our environment. So we need to plan ahead to have healthy and nutritious food available for the family while traveling.

To stay well hydrated and fueled, we need to eat and drink at frequent and regular intervals. Avoid getting too hungry or overeating foods contributing only calories and few essential nutrients. And remember that adults are role models for kids.

## Ideas for nutritious beverages and food to carry for travel

**1. Pack a water bottle for each member of the family.** Use smaller containers for younger members. One cup of water per hour could be a goal for adults. Children need a corresponding smaller amount.

Adequate hydration can be checked by noting urine concentration. With normal hydration, urine should appear dilute and lightly colored.

**2. Pack nutritious munchies in zip-lock type sandwich or snack bags:**

- Cut-up fruit such as bunches of grapes or apple wedges. For longer trips, bring whole and cut-up fruit for each day's journey.
- Cut-up vegetables such as a mixture of cherry tomatoes, green peppers, carrots, cauliflower, broccoli, etc.\*
- Small peanut butter and jelly sandwiches
- Trail mix of seeds, nuts, dried fruit.\*

*\* For young children limit accessibility of foods with small pieces that may promote choking.*

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**3. Purchase nutritious foods in individual serving sizes:**

- Individually wrapped cheese sticks
- Small boxes of raisins
- Individual containers of pudding

Food safety issues always need to be remembered when traveling with food. Remember to utilize cold packs in insulated containers for perishable foods. For longer trips, the cold packs need to be refrozen each evening. **Remember the old adage: If in doubt throw it out.** The small cost of the food is never worth the cost of food poisoning.

## Foods to limit for travel

1. Limit soft drinks and other sweetened beverages. There is little or no nutritional value.
2. Limit chips as well as other salty or sweet snack foods that provide little nutrition and many calories.

## Physical activity while traveling

Remember to get as much physical activity as possible while traveling. Stop at least every 100 miles at rest areas where there is a chance for all family members to get out of the car and be physically active. A walk for the adults or a game of tag for the kids always improves one's mood, increases the heart rate and utilizes a few calories.

## Relationship to health

The goal of a healthy lifestyle is to promote good health and reduce the risk of chronic disease. Current data indicates that 30 percent of the children in the U.S. are either overweight or at-risk of being overweight. Our daily food intake and physical activity habits (at home or while traveling) can help promote a healthy lifestyle.

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