TREE TOP NUTRITION TREE RECIPES

Here are a few Nutrition Tree recipes for hearty snacks and main meals designed for preschoolers. Each recipe features wholesome Tree Top applesauce or apple juice.

A word about juice: Apple juice is a good food that preschoolers especially love. Because it is a food, treat apple juice primarily as a snack, not as a regular thirst quencher (water is best for that). If *you* give your kids too much of any one kind of food, it can interfere with their willingness to eat other nutritious foods because they won't be hungry.

Ham and Applesauce Pizza

Great for a nutrient-dense snack or quick lunch.

- 1/4 cup Tree Top applesauce
- 1 English muffin, split
- 1 thin slice cooked ham
- 1 slice American cheese

Drain applesauce in sieve 1/2 hour. Toast split sides of English muffin. Spread applesauce on toasted surfaces, top with half slice of ham and cheese.* Toast or broil until cheese melts. Makes 2 servings.

*If desired, cut cheese in strips and form a grid over ham or cut cheese into shapes and place on ham.

Marinated Chicken Slices with Applesauce Dip

Just like fast food only better.

- 1 skinned and boned chicken breast half, cut into strips (about 6 oz.)
  Seasoned salt and pepper to taste
- 1/2 cup Tree Top apple juice
- 1/2 cup Tree Top applesauce
- 1 tablespoon orange juice

Sprinkle chicken strips with seasoned salt; add apple juice and marinate in small bowl in refrigerator 1 hour. Remove chicken from marinade, place in single layer in microwave- safe dish and microwave at HIGH (100%) 4 to 6 minutes; turn dish one-quarter turn halfway through cooking time. Mix applesauce and orange juice; serve with chicken strips for dipping. Makes 2 servings.

Applesauce Critters

A kid-pleasing treat with the crunch of pecans.

- 4 envelopes unflavored gelatin
- 1/2 cup apple juice
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1-1/2 cups applesauce
- 1/4 cup chopped pecans
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice

Soften gelatin in apple juice. Add sugar and cinnamon. Boil mixture over medium heat, stirring constantly, about 10 minutes or until mixture reaches soft ball state (235°F on candy thermometer). Remove from heat, add applesauce, pecans and lemon juice. Spray individual animal-shaped candy molds or 8-inch square pan with non-stick cooking spray. Refrigerate until firm. Unmold or cut 8-inch pan into animal shapes with cookie cutter or into 1-inch squares. Makes 30 molded pieces or 64 squares.

TREE TOP

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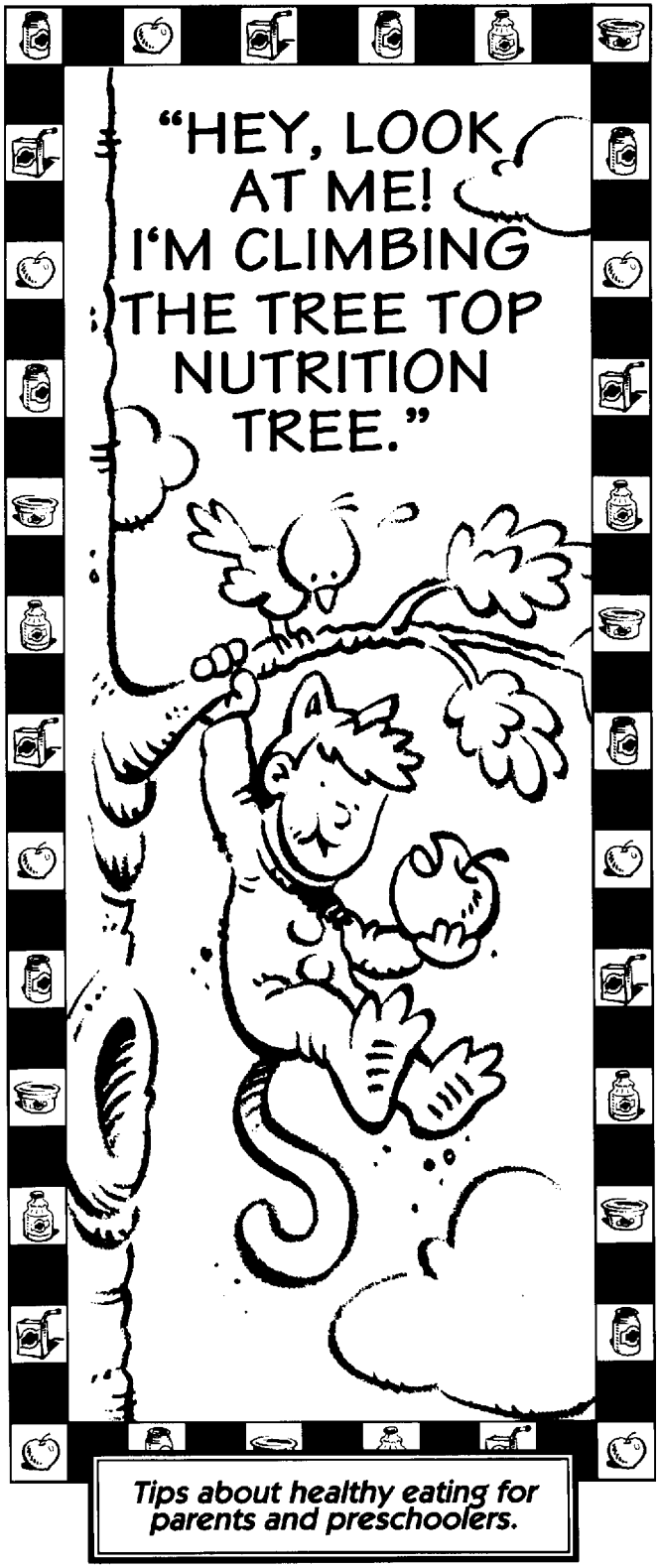
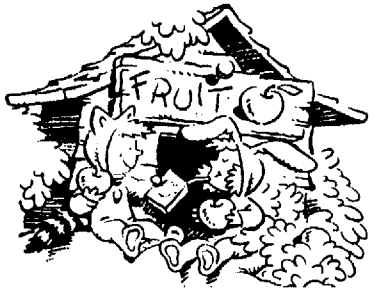


Tips about healthy eating for parents and preschoolers.

THE SEEDS OF GOOD NUTRITION: YOU CAN'T START TOO SOON.



Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them.

- James Baldwin

From the moment your baby is born, your child learns by example. Your baby watches you for clues about how to play, how to sleep and how to eat. If *you* eat a wholesome variety of nutritious foods, your child will very likely copy this behavior. If, on the other hand, you eat lots of sweets, soda pop and high-fat snacks, they will copy this behavior, too.

As a parent, you'll want to nurture and provide nourishment, but you don't have to be a gourmet cook, a short-order cook or a nutrition specialist. When feeding kids, the most important things to do are: provide a variety of good foods, make mealtimes important and make that time pleasant.You get to decide what to put on the plate and when it happens; your child is responsible for how much he or she eats. If you try to enforce food intake, the act of eating can become a war of wills.

MAKING SENSE OF SNACKS.

Snacks are good for kids. Really! Studies show that kids up to age 10 need to eat about every four hours to maintain their nervous systems. Here are three categories of snacks, and when it's best to serve them.

* **Light** — Serve light snacks when kids are hungry but a meal will soon follow. Light snacks are usually made of simple carbohydrates, the quick-energy nutrient. Good simple carbohydrate snacks include fruit juice, applesauce, 1/2 of a piece of fruit. Milk and vegetables (carrot sticks) make good light snacks, too.

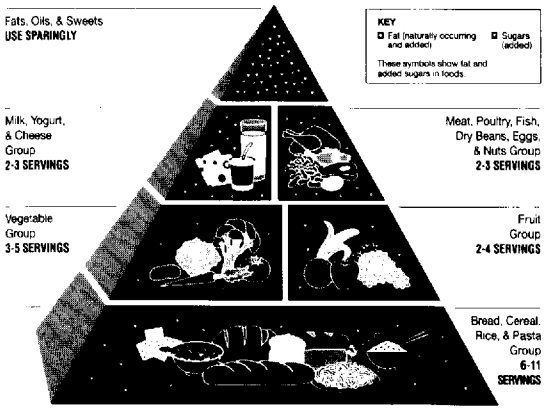
* **Medium** — Medium snacks are best served mid-morning or mid-afternoon between mealtimes. These snacks should offer complex carbohydrates, the sustained-energy nutrient. A little bit of fat, the energy-dense nutrient, can be added for flavor. A good "medium" snack is a graham cracker spread with cream cheese (fat).

* **Nutrient-dense** — Nutrient-dense snacks are truly mini-meal; They contain all three nutrients growing bodies need, carbohydrate, protein and fat. Offer these snacks after kids play sports or when meals are delayed. Two recipes in this brochure, Microwave Chicken Strips with Applesauce and Ham and Applesauce Pizza, are good examples of nutrient-dense snacks.

TEACHING KIDS TO EAT A VARIETY OF FOODS.

The U.S.D.A. Food Guide Pyramid below shows what a wholesome and varied diet looks like. It also shows which foods you and your family should eat the most of everyday — grains, fruits and vegetables — and which foods you should eat everyday but in lesser amounts — milk products and meat/protein foods. Using the Pyramid will help you and your family receive all the vitamins and minerals necessary for human nutrition as well as keeping other nutrients in proportion: carbohydrate (eat the most), protein (eat some), and fat (not too much; keep to 30% of daily calories).*

Introduce new foods to your kids regularly so they become accustomed to all the foods available to us. For example, serve yogurt as well as cheese, pea pods as well as peas, apple juice as well as grape, brown rice as well as white.



* Consult your pediatrician for nutrition advice for children under two years of age; they have slightly different needs than the rest of us.