

Safe Snack Guidelines

Do your best to provide safe snacks for the Cubbies in your club. Find out which Cubbies have food allergies and work with the parents to discover a good solution. Also be aware of common choking hazards for young children.

Allergies

Food allergies are becoming more and more common among children today. Ask parents at the beginning of the year if their child has any known food allergies. You may need to adapt your snacks or provide parents with an ingredient list of the snacks you will serve at each club meeting. Some parents may choose for their child to bring his or her own snack. Allergies to peanuts are the most common. Other foods that cause allergic reactions in children are milk, eggs, soy, wheat, tree nuts, fish and shellfish.



Choking Hazards

Sadly, choking is a leading cause of death among children, especially children aged 3 and under. Young children are just acquiring a full set of molars (the teeth that grind food into bits) and they don't always know how and when to use their molars. Complicating matters, their windpipe is, at its narrowest point, about the diameter of a drinking straw.

Be careful to supervise young children while they are eating and discourage them from talking until they have fully chewed their food.

AVOID these foods that put children at a high risk for choking:

- Hot dogs and sausages
- Hard, round candy
- Nuts and seeds
- Whole grapes (as well as olives, grape tomatoes and cherries)
- Raw carrots and other hard, raw fruits and vegetables (unless they are peeled and cut into ½-inch (1.3-cm) pieces)
- Popcorn
- Peanuts and chunks of peanut butter
- Marshmallows
- Raisins (and other dried fruits)
- Chewing gum and chewy candies

General Snack Ideas

Be careful not to only serve sugary snacks. Mix in healthy snacks as much as possible. Also be aware of any allergies in your club.

- Animal or Goldfish® crackers
- Pretzels
- Yogurt
- Applesauce
- Pudding

- Whole-grain crackers and breads
- Cheese quesadillas
- Whole-grain cereal pieces or colored cereal pieces to add fun
- Hummus
- Oatmeal cookies
- Waffles or waffle sticks topped with reduced-fat cream cheese and a fruit jelly
- Graham crackers
- Cracker sandwiches with fillings inside (cheese, chocolate, etc.)
- Cottage cheese sprinkled with a little cinnamon sugar

- Fruit smoothies
- Snack mix made with chocolate chips, cereal pieces or animal crackers and pretzels
- Cucumbers and dip (may want to peel the cucumbers)
- Soft fruits (such as bananas, blueberries, mandarin orange slices, raspberries, seedless watermelon)

NOTE: You may serve hard, raw fruits, like apples or pears, but it's best to peel them and cut them into ½-inch (1.3-cm) pieces.