

HEALTHY SCHOOL PARTIES

Everyone looks forward to a party. Parties are a fun opportunity to celebrate. A party can help celebrate the end of a unit, completion of a goal or a certain time of year. Celebrating is an important part of life but school parties don't always need to be cupcakes, potato chips and soda. With a little imagination parties can be fun and still provide healthy, nutrient rich foods. Parties offer the opportunity for schools to reinforce the message that making healthy food choices and being physically active means a healthier body and a sharper mind.

Give healthy partying a try with the following foods:

- Low-fat milk---plain, chocolate, strawberry, vanilla
- 100% juice---orange, apple, grape, cranberry—single servings
- Water---including flavored water
- Fresh fruit with yogurt dipping sauce
- Apples with caramel dip
- Fruit and cheese kabobs
- Fruit with whipped topping---strawberries with whip cream
- 100% fruit snacks
- Fruit crisps or bakes (made with little added sugar and whole grain toppings)
- Vegetable tray with low-fat dip
- Celery sticks with peanut butter
- String cheese
- Low-fat pretzels or popcorn
- Graham or animal crackers
- Pizza with low-fat toppings—veggies, lean ham, no extra cheese or more than one meat
- Sandwiches—ham, turkey, cheese(low fat condiments)
- Low-fat pudding cups
- Low-fat yogurt—Dannon Light'nFit, Trix, Yoplait, Yumsters
- Yogurt smoothies—low fat
- Yogurt parfaits—layered fruit, yogurt, and granola
- Quesadillas with salsa
- Granola bars or breakfast bars
- Trail mix or cereal mixes
- Angel food cake with fruit toppings
- Nuts, seeds

The foods offered at school parties should add to the fun, but try to avoid making them the main focus. Shift the focus from food to the students. With the focus on the students choose a variety of activities, games and crafts. Consider incorporating physical activities into the celebration. Plan games that keep the students moving, so the focus is on the fun and activities and the food becomes secondary. Get ideas from www.partygamecentral.com and www.party-games.zaural.ru/party-games-6.html.

What about Cupcakes?

A cupcake or piece of birthday cake can easily fit into a healthy diet. Keep cake a “sometimes” food by having all students with birthdays in the same month celebrate on one day. This limits parties with cake and other sugary and high fat foods to less than once a month.