



HCSF Newsletter

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It's the age old struggle – kids want sugary cereals and treats while you try every trick in the book to get them to eat healthy meals and snacks. This month, we've got a new trick for you - **Muffin Tin Meals**. Also, check out our shopping guide for suggestions on healthy breakfast and snack foods to pick up on your next grocery trip.

Are you pulling your hair out trying to get your kids to try new foods? Do you struggle with giving kids the right amount of food at mealtimes? Looking for a fun new way to serve meals? Why not try "**Muffin Tin Meal Nights**"!

Take a six-cup muffin tin and fill each opening with different foods in small amounts. The different compartments keep each food item from the "sin" of touching another food!! and the novelty might encourage your little ones to try something new.

No muffin tins? No problem! Simply use paper muffin cups instead of the tin. **Bonus** - using paper muffin cups alone, or inside the tins will speed clean-up even more.

Need some suggestions for what to serve? Try these:



baby carrots
sandwich cut-outs
applesauce

string cheese
apple slices
green beans

low fat ranch dip
broccoli trees
peas

whole grain crackers or pretzels
noodles with tomato sauce
graham cracker squares



Have older kids who need larger servings? Use a twelve-cup muffin tin. Even teens will get a kick out of dinner this way!

Another sure fire way to get more veggies into kids? Serve them veggies first! A recent study has shown that if you serve kids a vegetable BEFORE they have their regular meal (think carrots, celery or other favorite bite size veggies) they will eat those vegetables AND they will eat more of the vegetables that you serve with their meal.

We think that's a win, win!

So set out veggies for snacking while you're making dinner and let the kids have at it!



SHAMROCK TOASTIES

Ingredients:

- ♣ Boppin' bell pepper (green)
- ♣ English muffin
- ♣ Spaghetti sauce
- ♣ Reduced-fat cheddar cheese, shredded

Don't have English muffins? Use a glass to cut a round shape out of a slice of bread!

Directions:

- Slice a green pepper crosswise near the pointed end to get a small, three-lobed shamrock shape. (If your pepper has four lobes, you've got a lucky clover instead.) Cut a small slice for a stem.
- Toast half an English muffin or bread round. Top it with 1 Tablespoon of spaghetti sauce and 1 Tablespoon of cheddar cheese and the pepper shamrock. Place the muffin on a tray, and then broil it in a toaster oven or oven until the cheese is melted.

Breakfast and Snacks Shopping Guide

Cereal & Oatmeal: Kids may love sugary cereals, but from a nutrition standpoint, they are a terrible way to start the day (or for a snack). Looking for cereals that taste good and are good for you? Try these!



- Cheerios & Cheerios Multi Grain
- Kellogg's Frosted Mini Wheats, Shredded Wheat miniatures, Strawberry Squares Mini Wheats
- Kashi Go Lean
- Post Grape Nuts Flakes, Shredded Wheat
- General Mills Kix
- Quaker Life, Quaker Oatmeal Squares
- General Mills Multi-Bran Chex, Wheat Chex
- Quaker Lower Sugar Instant Oatmeal - it's healthiest to make your own oatmeal, but if you're low on time, this is a good choice



These cereals have 10 grams of sugar or less and at least 3 grams of fiber per serving.

Remember to always check the nutrition labels before you buy!

Granola Bars: Granola (and other cereal) bars can be great snacks when you're on the go. They are portable, satisfying and best of all, **not messy!**

Just don't be fooled by some of the healthy sounding names and bright packaging – for example, one package of **Nature Valley Granola bars** has *180 calories with only 2g of fiber, 11g of sugar and 4g of protein.* Those numbers are closer to a **Snickers bar!** General Mills' Cereal and Milk bars are also just candy bars in disguise.

Nutri-Grain bars are another big miss. They contain fruit, but they are very high in sugar. In fact, if you read the nutrition label, you'll see they are sweetened with sugar, corn syrup, honey and dextrose... OR: Sugar! Sugar! Sugar! Sugar! These are best left on the shelf.



What to look for instead? Try these:

Quaker Chewy Bars 25% Less Sugar- These bars are usually 90 to 110 calories, have only 5g of sugar and at least 3g of fiber.

Kashi TLC Bars - These chewy granola bars are 140 calories, with 4 grams of fiber, 5g of sugar, and 7g of protein.



Other winners: Luna Bars, Fiber One Cereal bars

Yogurts: It's tempting to buy the yogurts marketed to kids (like Go-gurt and Trix). Their bright colors and interesting packages (like Go-gurt's tube) appeal to kids, but unfortunately, they are also loaded with sugar and don't pack much of a nutritional punch.



Instead, try fruit on the bottom yogurts, or low sugar alternatives like **Yoplait Light** or **Dannon Light and Fit**. Plain low-fat yogurt is always a good choice – you can add in fruits, (fresh or dried), and a little honey for a touch of sweetness. Get creative with your 'add ins'....just keep them healthy and don't over-do!