

News Notes To Parents

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service of Wells County

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Have a Fun and Healthful Birthday Party

Follow these tips to provide a fun and delicious party spread that also is healthful.

1. **Make it fun.** Presentation is everything when serving party foods. It also is helpful to include a variety of colors, and make eating a hands-on experience. Try cutting finger foods such as mini sandwiches or melon into fun shapes using cookie cutters, serving kebabs and providing dips and other interactive foods to keep kids engaged.
2. **Choose nutritious time-saving foods.** When it comes to quick-and-easy options, go for air-popped popcorn, whole-grain tortilla chips with salsa, bean dip or guacamole, or whole-wheat pita bread with hummus. Toss together a simple trail mix made with whole-grain cereal, nuts and dried fruit for an energizing mix of complex carbohydrates and protein. If you are serving a meal at your child's party, consider ordering from a local restaurant as many cater and can provide a balanced spread. Some ideas: tacos, sub-style or mini sandwiches and baked chicken nuggets.
3. **Build a colorful fruit and vegetable tray.** Aim for a variety of color and textures on fruit and vegetable trays. Try combining watermelon slices, tangerines, grape tomatoes, baby carrots, steamed and chilled green beans and cauliflower florets. Including a variety of colors ensures kids are getting a range of nutrients. Serve with hummus, ranch or yogurt dip.
4. **Include a filling main event.** For a protein-packed



finger food, prepare mini meatballs with lean ground beef or turkey. Serve on toothpicks with a tomato-based sauce for dipping. Or have a homemade pizza party and

turn the food prep into a party activity — kids like to eat what they create. Try do-it-yourself personal pizzas using whole-wheat English muffins or pita bread for crust. Provide lower-sodium marinara sauce, low-fat cheese, turkey pepperoni and plenty of fresh vegetables.

5. **Serve a hydrating drink.** Instead of soda or other



sweetened beverages, serve fruit juice mixed with sparkling water for a bubbly drink with less sugar, or try infusing water with fresh fruit, such as strawberries, oranges or lemons.

6. **Be smart with sweet treats.** Serve mini-cupcakes or serve each child individually, rather than leaving sweets out for the taking. Nutrient-dense options include fruit- or yogurt-based popsicles.
7. **After the party goodies.** Take-away goodie bags are common at children's birthday parties. Try some of following items for fun goodie bags:
 - Fruit cups in their own juices or unsweetened applesauce.
 - Tangerines.
 - Single-serving boxes of lightly sweetened whole-grain cereal.
 - Snack size shelf stable fat-free pudding.
 - 100% fruit leathers.
 - Non-food items such as pencils, art supplies and outdoor games.

With these tips, you can make the next birthday party an opportunity to teach your child that eating healthfully can be fun — and delicious.

Source: www.eatright.org



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The Joy of Cooking with Kids During the Holidays

By: Esther Ellis, MS, RDN, LDN—September 13, 2023

Look Who's Cooking!

To keep your children enthusiastic about cooking, assign steps of a holiday recipe that they are able to do based on their abilities. Here are some ideas

depending on your child's age (however, each child's ability to learn a new task may vary):

- **2- to 3-year-olds:** wash fresh produce, snap green beans, tear lettuce for a salad, press cookie cutters
- **3- to 5-year-olds:** mix together simple ingredients, spread ingredients such as frosting or butter
- **5- to 7-year-olds:** shuck corn, crack eggs, dip items
- **7- to 9-year-olds:** measure ingredients, use a can opener, check the temperature of foods with a thermometer, pound chicken on a cutting board
- **10-year-olds or older:** slice or chop vegetables, microwave foods, bake foods in the oven, simmer ingredients on the stove

For a kid-friendly holiday recipe, see the example below.

To read the full article, go to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics www.eatright.org

Reindeer Cookies

These reindeer cookies are really adorable! Children enjoy making and eating them.

Ingredients

- 1 cup butter, softened
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 cup smooth peanut butter
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 teaspoons baking soda
- 72 small pretzel twists, or as needed
- ½ cup chocolate chips, or as needed



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Directions

Before you begin: Wash your hands.

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C).
2. Beat butter, sugar, peanut butter, eggs, vanilla extract, and salt together in a bowl until smooth and creamy. Stir flour and baking soda into creamed butter mixture until well incorporated.
3. Roll dough into 36 balls. Flatten each ball and shape into an upside-down triangle. Press two pretzels into the two top corners of each triangle for the antlers. Press two chocolate chips into the center of each triangle for the eyes, and one chocolate chip or M&M on the bottom of the triangle for the nose. Arrange cookies on baking sheets.
4. Bake in the preheated oven until cookies are golden brown, 10-15 minutes

Source: www.allrecipes.com

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