Back To School Healthy Snacks
By: Dr. Alyssa Musgrove

For many parents, back to school means back to packing lunches and snacks. While it’s easy to grab packaged, processed foods to fill those lunch boxes, healthier options will always provide bigger benefits. Not only do healthier food choices deliver a significantly higher nutritional punch, they also can help support life-long healthy eating habits and prevent costly chronic disease -- like diabetes, heart disease, obesity, high blood pressure and even cancer.

The good news is that healthy options don’t have to take a lot of time or energy. Below are some quick and easy snacks the kids will actually enjoy seeing in their lunch box.

**5-Ingredient Almond Coconut Bars**Makes 12 bars in 10 minutes

A great high-protein snack that will keep kids full longer. You can add any other nuts or dried fruits of your choice. These bars are also great to pack on-the-go, add to lunch boxes for school or as a sweet treat.

-1 cup unsweetened shredded coconut
-1 cup raw almonds
-1 cup raw cashews
-1/4 cup almond butter
-3 TBS maple syrup
-2-3 TBS water

Line a 9X5 inch loaf baking pan with parchment paper and set aside.

Place all the ingredients (except the water) in a [food processor](http://amzn.to/2HqxGlf) or high-power blender. Pulse. If the mixture doesn't come together, add 1 tablespoon of water at a time pulsing the food processor in between. If needed, add more water until the mixture comes together. Place the mixture in the prepared baking pan. Press with a [spatula](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00KY3T536/ref%3Das_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00KY3T536&linkCode=as2&tag=eago4li0c-20&linkId=RDAL5722KOLVZFKS) until it is uniform on all sides. Place in the refrigerator for 2-3 hours. Cut into squares and keep leftovers covered in the refrigerator.

**Superfood Energy Bites**makes about 30 “bite balls” in 20 minutes

-1 cup [pitted dates](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref%3Das_li_ss_tl?_encoding=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&field-keywords=pitted%20dates&linkCode=ur2&rh=i%3Aaps%2Ck%3Apitted%20dates&tag=eago4li0c-20&url=search-alias%3Daps&linkId=7UL6RD26XP32V2C4)

-1 cup [golden berries](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref%3Das_li_ss_tl?_encoding=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&field-keywords=golden%20berries&linkCode=ur2&rh=i%3Aaps%2Ck%3Agolden%20berries&tag=eago4li0c-20&url=search-alias%3Daps&linkId=KGLVFVI52IX2LGL5)

-2 TBS [flaxseed meal](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref%3Das_li_ss_tl?_encoding=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&field-keywords=flaxseed%20meal&linkCode=ur2&rh=i%3Aaps%2Ck%3Aflaxseed%20meal&tag=eago4li0c-20&url=search-alias%3Daps&linkId=K2D55ALXOCN3JHEO)

-2 TBS [chia seeds](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref%3Das_li_ss_tl?_encoding=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&field-keywords=chia%20seeds&linkCode=ur2&rh=i%3Aaps%2Ck%3Achia%20seeds&tag=eago4li0c-20&url=search-alias%3Daps&linkId=XNLAWP3RZXNJ5X42)

-1 1/2 cups [gluten-free rolled oats](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref%3Das_li_ss_tl?_encoding=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&field-keywords=gluten%20free%20rolled%20oats&linkCode=ur2&rh=i%3Aaps%2Ck%3Agluten%20free%20rolled%20oats&tag=eago4li0c-20&url=search-alias%3Daps&linkId=PKF4KR322IRFKY3H)

-1 cup [dried cranberries](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref%3Das_li_ss_tl?_encoding=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&field-keywords=dried%20cranberries&linkCode=ur2&rh=i%3Aaps%2Ck%3Adried%20cranberries&tag=eago4li0c-20&url=search-alias%3Daps&linkId=GLG5HDFHMQVWA4FG)

-1 cup pistachios

-1/4 cup water + 2 TBS

Add the dates, golden berries, flax, water and chia seeds to your [food processor](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref%3Das_li_ss_tl?_encoding=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&field-keywords=food%20processor&linkCode=ur2&tag=eago4li0c-20&url=search-alias%3Daps&linkId=CYE5DPVF7PVJGBYS). Pulse until the mixture comes together. It will be wet. Add the oats, cranberries, pistachios and pulse just enough so that it gets mixed in with the previous mixture. You don't want this mixture to be pureed. Rather, you want to still be able to see the chunks of pistachios and cranberries. Transfer the mixture to a [mixing bowl](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref%3Das_li_ss_tl?_encoding=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&field-keywords=mixing%20bowl&linkCode=ur2&rh=i%3Aaps%2Ck%3Amixing%20bowl&tag=eago4li0c-20&url=search-alias%3Daps&linkId=JUR4E2NR62XE73D3) and form small balls with your hands. You can keep these refrigerated in a covered [glass container](http://www.amazon.com/s/ref%3Das_li_ss_tl?_encoding=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&field-keywords=glass%20container&linkCode=ur2&rh=i%3Aaps%2Ck%3Aglass%20container&tag=eago4li0c-20&url=search-alias%3Daps&linkId=QT47GFEXUVPCOERE) for up to 1 week.

**Garlic Parmesan Roasted Chickpeas**

-2 15.5-oz cans chickpeas, rinsed and drained

 -2 tbsp [coconut oil](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00DS842HS/ref%3Das_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00DS842HS&linkCode=as2&tag=eago4li0c-20&linkId=2TEZR2HW7C5ITCES), melted

 -1/2 tsp salt

 -1 tsp minced garlic

 -1/2 cup parmesan cheese

Lay chickpeas to dry for 30 minutes. Preheat your oven to 400 degrees Fahrenheit. Place 1 tablespoon of coconut oil in a [mixing bowl](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00004SZ7H/ref%3Das_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B00004SZ7H&linkCode=as2&tag=eago4li0c-20&linkId=FS4U4N2ZAM5PJZHL), and the chickpeas, salt, garlic and parmesan and toss to coat the chickpeas. Add cayenne and curry powder if desired. Stir to coat. Spread the chickpeas on a single layer on a [baking sheet](http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B000G0KJG4/ref%3Das_li_tl?ie=UTF8&camp=1789&creative=390957&creativeASIN=B000G0KJG4&linkCode=as2&tag=eago4li0c-20&linkId=JQM43CKUTHFCDSRG). Drizzle with the extra TBS of melted coconut oil and bake chickpeas for 20 minutes. Stir, and continue to bake and stir for up to an hour until crispy.

**Curried Avocado Egg Salad**
-4 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
-1/2 large avocado, cubed
-1/2 Tablespoon dijon mustard
-2 teaspoons relish or chopped pickles
-2 teaspoons green onions, chopped
-1 teaspoon apple cider vinegar
-1 teaspoon curry powder
- Sea salt and ground pepper, to taste
- *Optional add-ins:* fresh dill, chopped celery, raisins

Add all ingredients to a bowl and mash together with a fork. Taste and season with additional salt and pepper. Use egg salad on salads, sandwiches or wraps.

**Sunflower Seed Backpack Kisses**
-1/2 cup rolled oats -1 tablespoon flaxseed-1 tablespoon hemp seeds-2 Tablespoon raisins-2 Tablespoons dairy-free mini chocolate chips-pinch of sea salt-1/2 cup [sunflower seed butter](https://www.eatingbirdfood.com/homemade-sunbutter/) (my favorite is Trader Joe’s brand)-1 Tablespoon maple syrup

In a large bowl, mix together oats, hemp seeds, flaxseed, raisins, chocolate chips and sea salt. Add sunflower seed butter and maple syrup and mix together. Using your hands, knead mixture thoroughly and roll into small balls. You should be able to make around 10-11. Wrap each ball in a square of aluminum foil, twisting the top to seal and create a “kiss.” You can also store them unwrapped in an airtight container. Store in the fridge for up to two weeks or in the freezer for up to a month.

\*\*If you are a grandparent and would like to share this article with your family, you can find it on the Pathways to Healing website, www.PathwaysToHealing.biz.

*Pathways to Healing specializes in holistic chiropractic care. Dr. Alyssa Musgrove draws on a variety of techniques, including chiropractic, kinesiology, nutrition, food allergy testing and lifestyle counseling to assist clients in achieving optimal health and wellness in one setting. Pathways to Healing is located at 1022 Founders Row, Lake Oconee Village, Greensboro. The office can be reached at 706-454-2040.*