



Looking for Ways to Make School Classroom Parties Healthier?



Here's a GRAB BAG of Ideas

Minimize the importance of food

- Let other activities take center stage
- Allow students to rotate through centers of different activities – one of which can be eating a treat
- Create the treat as a class – emphasize the creation and the community rather than the treat itself (e.g., fruit salad, trail mix, no-bake granola cookies)

Consider “treats” that are **not food**:

- Play a class game
- Allow students to bring in favorite board games
- Teach everyone a new card game (e.g., 31, Speed, Hearts, Crazy Eights, Go Fish)
- Allow students to decorate “goodie bags” and then choose special prizes to put in their bag (e.g., stickers, pencils, bracelets, bookmarks, erasers)
- Make a fun craft

Ideas of “treats” that can be healthier:

- Popcorn, p. 171
- Veggies (e.g., carrot chips, cucumber sticks, bell pepper strips, stuffed celery sticks)
- Fruit (e.g., watermelon cubes, apple slices, berries, orange slices, grapes)
Tip: Drizzle apple slices with apple, orange or lemon juice to prevent browning
- Granola or granola bars, pp. 112-113, 208
- Trail Mix, p. 117
- Fruit Crisps, p. 202-203
- Yogurt or small ice cream cups with fruit and granola toppings
- Pretzels or whole-grain crackers and cheese
- Strawberry Shortcake made with whole-grain biscuits, p.196

Consider **Beverages**:

- Try water in fun cups – kids love the paper cups with jokes on them!
- Opt for water and/or juice over soda
- When choosing juice, ask for 100% juice instead of juices sweetened with sugar or corn syrup

Even traditional food treats can be served in a healthier manner:

Consider **Portions**:

- Instead of large cupcakes, try a small sheet cake cut into small pieces
- Instead of large cookies, try 2 small cookies
- Serve mini-muffins/cupcakes (2 small are less than 1 large)
- Instead of purchasing individual bags of munchies, consider one large bag that can be divided into small portions for each student (this gives you control over portion size, expands the selection available and saves money)
- Limit serving sizes of juice by choosing individual small containers or pouring small portions into individual cups. By offering a cup of water to each student along with the juice, many students will quench their thirst with the water and then enjoy the flavor of the juice in more reasonable amounts.

Consider **overall sugar**:

- Instead of treats and juice, choose treats and water
- Instead of cookies and candy, choose cookies and fruit
- Instead of cupcakes with frosting, choose muffins, pp. 186-187 or pp. 200 + 206 (without frosting)

Consider **sodium**:

- Instead of chips and popcorn and pretzels and cheese, choose only 1 or 2 salty items
- Evaluate beverages for sodium

Balance sugar with **protein** and/or **fiber**:

- Protein and fiber slow down the absorption of sugar, helping to avoid sugar spikes*
- Serve sweet treats with slices of cheese
 - Ask for treats made with whole grains to increase the protein and fiber (oats are a great addition to cookies and bars), pp. 197-200, 206
 - Serve treats with fruit and veggies on the side or baked into the treat to increase fiber, pp. 197, 200-206, 209