

Summer Snacking – Naturally Gluten-Free

Facing an entire summer of hungry kids with specific food needs? Registered dietician, Ashley Koff and founder of [Ashley Koff Approved](#) shares some kid-tested, parent-approved, naturally gluten-free snacks sure to satisfy even the pickiest eaters

It's time for kids to enjoy the freedom of summer vacation, which means the annual pressure on parents to provide a variety of healthy snacks mounts. While it's one thing to feed your kids' growling bellies at home, it's a whole different game if they have summer camps and activities that require eating on-the-go. If your child follows a gluten-free diet, this pressure can seem even greater as you search to find kid-approved options that are gluten-free, taste good *and* are healthy.

First, note that when it comes to capturing the full health benefits from a gluten-free diet, it's best to choose the highest-quality ingredients. This means eating organic and non-GMO food and steering clear of anything artificial ([click here](#) to learn more about the Kettle Brand® Natural Promise). This also means eating "whole foods" as often as possible. "Whole foods" provide optimal ratios of ingredients like fiber to sugar and potassium to sodium content.

Second, beyond what we feed our kids, what we package their food in matters too. From what you pack their lunch in to what they drink from, make sure to use BPA-free, eco-friendly materials for a healthier child and a healthier environment.

Third, to take the pressure off, remember that kids' bodies need "eating occasions," not separate meals during the day. Think of the day as a series of "pit stops" and remind them that their bodies are like race cars that need refueling about every three hours. Also, aim for a balance of nutrients at each eating occasion – some carbohydrates, protein, and healthy fat – plus unlimited vegetables. This way you can pack a bag of fun "sample-sized" items and your child can *choose* what they eat and when. We want kids to feel empowered and excited to make healthy food choices.

Need some kid-tested, parent and Ashley Koff Approved (AKA), ideas?

REAL potato chips (choose organic or baked): achieve portion control by re-packing into portion-controlled containers, or [buy the 100 calorie Kettle Brand® Baked packs](#), perfect for school or on the go. Potatoes are naturally gluten-free, and since Kettle Brand® uses real slices of whole potatoes, and you can be assured that their products are gluten-free. For nutritional balance, pack a string cheese and salsa for some extra veggies.

You can also crumble corn [tortilla chips](#) (gluten-free too) into a salad and make a taco salad with beans, avocado, salsa and chicken (optional).

Peanut Butter and fruit: Take a gluten-free waffle and spread a nut butter (almond, peanut, or sunflower seed if you're skipping nuts) and place sliced strawberries on top.

Quick sundae, everyday: grab a plain, organic yogurt and let kids add their own toppings like organic berries, gluten-free granola or whole grain cereal (you can also use your trail mix here – see #2)

Dip-it!: dips are a perfect way to upgrade nutrition and even squeeze in some veggies. If you use organic Greek yogurt you'll get more protein and less carbohydrates so it pairs perfectly

with your [Kettle Brand® Baked Potato Chips](#). Make your dips in kid-friendly flavors (and even hide some pureed broccoli in there) by adding spices or blending with a nut butter and some honey. Kids love this dip and it goes great with vegetables or Kettle Brand® Potato Chips.

For these and more recipes, visit ashleykoffapproved.com or see my cookbook, *Recipes for IBS*.