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EXTENSION**

Family Matters

Improving Health Together

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Summertime Smoothies

By Tina Haney, Family and Consumer Science Specialist, Gunnison County



During the summer it can be hard to think about cooking, especially on hot days, when you would rather be outside playing with the children or just enjoying the summertime breeze. Smoothies are a great option to beat the heat and take little time to prepare. Children can help you make them, too!

Smoothies are a great treat any time of year, but especially in summer. You can make them at home or find them in grocery stores, convenience stores, and restaurants. Smoothies make a great snack for children and adults, but you can also use them as a meal! Meals are where we get most of our energy and nutrition, and that's just what children need in the long, hot days of summer. Plus, they're quick to make and easy to carry for on-the-go days.

Some things to think about when you're making a smoothie as a meal are calories, carbohydrates, protein, and fat content. You can balance nutrition by using fruits, vegetables, dairy, protein, and fat.

- **Calories:** As a meal, a smoothie can provide more than 300 calories per 8 oz serving.
- **Carbohydrates:** Fiber, a carbohydrate, is beneficial to your health by helping you feel full and aiding digestion. Fruits and vegetables provide vitamins and fiber. Frozen fruits keep the smoothie nice and cold. Consider adding greens such as spinach and kale for added nutrition!
- **Protein:** Protein helps build muscle. Peanut butter, nuts, seeds, beans, and soy provide protein and can be added to smoothies. Yogurt also has protein and is often used in smoothies.
- **Fat:** Our bodies need fat to provide energy and carry nutrients. Focus on monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats by adding nuts, nut butters, seeds, or avocado to your smoothie.
- **Other healthy things to add to your smoothie:** Spices like cinnamon, ginger, and turmeric go great in smoothies. You can also add cocoa powder, coconut water, almond milk, chia seeds, avocados, and oats.

Smoothies are very nutritious and provide a great way to get your daily vitamins and nutrition.

Smoothie Meal Prep Tips

- Use frozen fruit and veggies, bananas, oats, or avocados to help make the smoothie thicker and reduce the need for ice.
- Use ripe bananas for sweetness.
- Add chia or flax seeds to increase fiber and add heart healthy omega 3 fatty acids.
- The combo of oats, nut butter, and bananas will help keep you feeling full.
- Spinach and kale are great to sneak into a smoothie for picky children.
- Greek yogurt makes a smoothie creamy and thick.

Helping families increase physical activity and enjoy healthy foods ...

Let's Talk

Smoothies are a great way to keep children hydrated and fueled while they're busy playing, running, and exploring in the summer sun. But what if your child is opposed to fruits and vegetables? Here are some ideas to help your child buy into the wonderful taste of a refreshing smoothie.

- Take them to the store to pick out the fruit they want.
- Have them help prepare the smoothie. Running the blender is a lot of fun!
- Putting ice in the blender and running it is fun to watch.
- Buy a special smoothie cup or bottle that they can use at any time.
- Have them pick a vegetable like spinach and see if they can get it to “disappear” in the blender among all the other ingredients.
- Let them choose when in the day they would like to enjoy their smoothie.
- Make it a fun activity together!
- Be a role model! Let them see you enjoying the benefits of a delicious smoothie right along with them.

Not only do smoothies taste great, but they help keep your body healthy. Perfect for those hot summer days when most of your time is spent outside. You can find numerous recipes online, or make your own concoction then share it with your children and friends.

Recipe for Health

Chocolate Banana Black Bean Smoothie Recipe

Ingredients:

- ½ cup cooked black beans
- 2 large over ripe bananas
- ½ cup milk
- ¼ cup plain yogurt
- 2 Tbs unsweetened cocoa powder
- Honey or sweetener of your choice, to taste (optional)

Directions

1. Wash hands and food contact surfaces with soap and water.
2. Drain and rinse beans very well.
3. Add all ingredients to a high-powered blender and blend.
4. Serve and enjoy!

Tips

- It is really important to use over ripe bananas for a natural boost of sweetness in this smoothie.
- You can also use ¾ cup milk instead of a mix of milk and yogurt.



For more information, ideas and recipes visit the Colorado State University Food Smart website at: foodsmartcolorado.colostate.edu

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