

# QUICK *bites*

**F**inding healthy snacks for kids can be a challenge.

Some are loaded with sugar; many have unpronounceable ingredients.

Melaina Bjorklund, MS, RD, clinical dietitian at Penrose-St. Francis Health Services, says there is an easy way to be sure what's in the snacks you give your child: Make them yourself. Better yet, have your kids make them with you.

Her favorite snack recipe: her own, of course!

Mix natural peanut butter (or other nut or seed butters if your child has a peanut allergy) with old-fashioned oats, toasted coconut, honey, and milled flaxseed. Add raisins, dried cranberries, or any other dried fruit you and your child prefer. Then, roll up into portion-sized balls, and pop in the freezer.

Freezing helps the bars hold their shape without the stabilizers commercial bar manufacturers often include, Bjorklund says.

The internet is full of suggestions for healthy treats to make at home. Here are a few options:

## BLUEBERRY-YOGURT COOKIES

*from spoonforkbacon.com*

### Ingredients

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1¼ cups superfine or granulated sugar
- 1¼ cups Greek yogurt
- 1 egg, lightly beaten
- 1 lemon, zested
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1¼ cups fresh blueberries
- ½ cup Swedish pearl sugar

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 375 F.
2. In a large mixing bowl, combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. Whisk together and set aside.
3. In another mixing bowl, whisk together sugar, yogurt, egg, lemon zest and juice, and vanilla until fully combined. Add the flour mixture to the yogurt mixture and stir until little to no lumps remain. Gently fold in the blueberries.
4. Grease two baking sheets with cooking spray and drop 2 tablespoon-sized dollops of batter about 1 inch apart. Sprinkle the tops of each cookie with a small amount of pearl sugar.
5. Bake for about 12 minutes or until the edges barely begin to brown. Carefully transfer cookies onto a cooling rack and allow to slightly cool before serving.
6. Cookies can be stored in an airtight container for 2-3 days and are best if refreshed in a warmed oven for about 7 minutes before serving.

## PUMPKIN BREAKFAST COOKIES

*from leelalicious.com*

### Ingredients

- ¼ cup coconut oil, melted
- ¼ cup honey
- 1 cup rolled old-fashioned oats
- 1 cup quick-cooking oats
- ⅔ cup dried cranberries, unsweetened
- ⅔ cup pumpkin seeds
- ¼ cup ground flaxseed
- 1 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice
- ½ teaspoon sea salt
- ½ cup pumpkin puree
- 2 eggs, beaten

### Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 F. Line a baking sheet.
2. In a small bowl, warm coconut oil and honey (either in your microwave, inside the preheating oven, or on the stove top).
3. In a large bowl, combine both kinds of oats, cranberries, pumpkin seeds, ground flax, pumpkin pie spice, and salt. Add pumpkin puree, eggs, and warmed coconut oil and honey. Stir until fully combined.
4. Drop ¼ cup-sized scoops of the mixture onto a cookie sheet and flatten (cookies won't spread while baking). Bake for 15-20 minutes until edges are lightly browned.
5. Let cookies cool on baking sheet before moving to an airtight storage container.

## ALMOND BUTTER PROTEIN BARS

*from mywholefoodlife.com*

### Ingredients

- 1 cup rolled oats
- ½ cup almond butter
- 8 dates, pitted
- 2 tablespoons chia seeds
- 2 tablespoons flax meal
- ¼ cup water

### Directions

1. In a food processor, grind the oats into a coarse consistency.
2. Add the remaining ingredients and mix until a sticky dough is formed.
3. Roll the dough into balls or make them into bars. Line an 8 x 8-inch or smaller pan with parchment, leaving parchment extending from the sides of the pan. That will make the bars easy to pull out and cut.
4. Let them chill in the fridge for about 30 minutes to an hour. Then cut into squares.

