

SPOTLIGHT: BEANS



Beans are powerhouse food. A powerhouse food is a food that has a lot of vitamins and minerals and nutrients your body needs. There are many types of beans to choose from and all have important benefits. Beans are affordable and easy to find in the grocery store. They come canned or dried making them shelf stable.

It is recommended for kids ages 2-8 years old need ½ - 1 ½ cups of beans, peas, or lentils each week. For older children and teens, it is recommended to have 1/2 – 2 ½ cups each week depending on their calories needs. For toddlers, beans are a choking hazard, so it is always important to supervise. For babies under 12 months old, they should not eat whole beans, but they can still eat them if they are mashed or flattened.

Kids can be picky and may not be open to trying new foods. By having them help you cook in the kitchen they get exposure to new foods. It's important to expose young kids to the taste and texture of beans by serving them as a snack or part of a meal.

TABLE TALK



Where to incorporate beans

Beans can be prepared in many different ways, making them versatile.

Some ways include:

- Blended into a pasta sauce
- Baked goods such as brownies or muffins
- Dips: hummus or salsa
- As a spread on a tortilla
- Taco bowl
- Blended into a puree in a soup
- Incorporated in a salad

When choosing beans for your child, be sure they drink plenty of water alongside that meal or snack. Beans are high in fiber, and it's important to drink enough water with high fiber foods.

IN THE KITCHEN NO BAKE BEAN ENERGY BALLS



Ingredients

- 1 15 oz can chickpeas or black beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 cup oats
- ½ cup nut butter
- 1/3 cup honey
- ¼ tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ¼ cup mini chocolate chips

Directions

Put all ingredients into a food processor except chocolate chips

Blend until combined. Add a little water if it's too thick

Mix in chocolate chips and refrigerate until slightly firm

Roll into tablespoon-sized balls

