



FOOD BITES

August 2014



Send Your Kids Back to School Prepared to Learn

Is good nutrition important for good learning? In a word, yes. Research has shown that children who regularly ate breakfast had better standardized test scores, better behavior, and were less hyperactive than children who skipped breakfast. When comparing low glycemic index breakfasts to high GI breakfasts eaten by 9 - 12 year-old children, research also shows that children who eat high GI breakfasts (sugary breakfasts) tend to eat more at lunch.

Breakfast is Important

What makes a good breakfast for children? One good example would be an egg, a slice of whole grain toast with nut butter, a piece of fruit and a glass of low-fat milk. Tofu, lean meat and whole grain cereals are also good choices at breakfast. The protein and fiber from the whole grains will keep your child satisfied until lunch time.

Try to avoid giving your child sugary breakfast cereals, white-flour pancakes and syrup--all of which will leave your child hungry and tired half way through the morning. If your child tends to get hungry in the middle of the morning no matter what, send an apple, whole grain crackers, nuts and cheese snacks rather than sugary cookies or white-flour crackers.

School Lunches

Eating healthy at lunch will help keep your child's mind sharp and ready to learn all afternoon. Convincing schools to change their lunches might take a lot of effort, but there are other things you can do, such as teach your kids the importance of eating nutritious foods. Hopefully with your help they will choose healthier salads and vegetables instead of French fries, and water instead of soda. Another option is to send lunch with your kids. Hearty soups, salads, fruits, and sandwiches with whole grains can all be packed in insulated containers to stay hot or cold. *(Continued on page 2)*



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Send Your Kids Back to School Prepared to Learn...cont...

After School Snacks

Even with a great breakfast and healthy lunch, a light after-school snack is nice to refuel a child's body before play or study time. A handful of nuts and an apple is perfect, or maybe a snack tray of vegetables and dips. Even a PB&J will satisfy picky kids. Keep chips, sugary sodas, pastries and candy out of the house. Studies show that sugary and high glycemic index foods just make kids hungrier.

Life-Long Health Means Good Nutrition

Children who eat healthy foods will be more likely to make better food and nutrition choices as adults. Unfortunately, studies show that the opposite is also true; overweight children tend to become overweight adults.

Teach your children about healthy foods. Here are some tips to help:

- Read over the different food pyramids and ask your kids to pick out some favorite foods from each food group.
- Have them help you plan a meal that includes a healthy serving of protein, a vegetable or two, and a healthy fruit for dessert.
- For young kids, make a chart to keep track of all the fruits and vegetables they eat (we need at least five servings of fruits and veggies every day).
- Snack time can be more fun if you try different recipes and snack ideas together with your kids.

Teaching your children how to have a healthy diet will have a bigger impact if you set the example. Eat right, get some exercise, and make a healthy lifestyle a family affair.



Packing School Lunches Doesn't Have to Be Costly...



- Fruits & Veggies
- Homemade Granola
- Hummus
- Cheese
- Peanut Butter
- Trail Mix
- Sandwiches or Wraps
- Popcorn

These are all healthy choices that can be purchased and combined to give your child a well-rounded lunch to sustain them throughout their day.

Help Your Child Succeed in School with Family Meals

Helping your child succeed in school may be as easy as sitting down for a family meal. Eating meals as a family plays a key role in raising high-achieving, healthy and well-adjusted children.

Benefits of Family Meals...

- Frequent family meals are linked with being successful in school, including getting better grades and scoring higher on achievement tests.
- Family meals contribute to higher daily intakes of fruit, vegetables and important nutrients like calcium, fiber, iron, vitamins B6 and B12, C and E, and less overall dietary fat.
- Mealtime conversation brings the family together, promotes positive self-esteem in children and starts a lasting and positive relationship with food.

Making Mealtime Family Time...

Family meals should be dynamic - an exchange of ideas, conversation and feelings. Mealtime is a wonderful opportunity to strengthen family ties and pass on family cultural traditions.

- Eat together as a family whenever possible.
- Keep mealtime pleasant - avoid power struggles over what gets eaten, and remember that mealtime is not a time for discipline.
- Turn off the TV, video games, mobile phones and the computer.
- Use conversation-starters to get children talking, such as "What is the best or worst thing that happened today at school?"

Be a Healthy Eating Role Model...

As role models, parents need to demonstrate healthy behaviors so that their children have healthy attitudes about eating and develop healthy eating habits. Your attitude about food and eating habits might influence your children:

- Do you skip breakfast?
- Do you drink sodas rather than milk with your meals?
- Do you diet all the time and have a fear of eating "bad" food?
- Do you snack all day long?
- Do you eat in front of the TV?
- Do you eat whenever you are bored or under stress?

If you answered "yes" to more than a few of these questions, you are likely sending unhealthy messages to your child about food.

Healthy Eating Starts With Parents...

Modeling healthy eating supports the development of healthy behaviors in children. Here are a few healthy eating habits parents can role model for their children:

- Never skip meals - especially breakfast.
- Take moderate portions.
- Limit junk food in the house.
- Drink water and milk instead of soda.
- Cook and prepare food with your children.
- Eat foods from all food groups.
- Try fruit and yogurt for dessert.
- Eat the way you want your child to eat.
- Avoid emphasizing "good" and "bad" foods.
- Show ways for managing stress that do not include eating.
- Encourage your kids to help prepare meals, set the table and help with the dishes.
- Enjoy your meals - positive attitudes are contagious!

Sandwich on a Stick

Ingredients:

Bread
cheese
Lunch meat
grape tomatoes
Lettuce
pickles
Olives



Instructions:

- Cut up cubes of bread, cheese, and lunch meat.
- Slide the cubes onto a skewer with other foods your child likes, such as a grape tomato, a piece of lettuce, a pickle, or an olive.
- Set out a side of mayo, mustard, or ranch dressing for dipping.

Source: familyfun.com

**YOU DON'T
STOP
PLAYING
BECAUSE
YOU GET OLD,
YOU GET OLD
BECAUSE
YOU STOP
PLAYING.**

Southwestern Club Wrap

Ingredients:

4 to 6 large flour tortillas
3/4 cup ranch dressing
1/3 cup barbecue sauce
1/4 head iceberg lettuce, thinly sliced
1/2 lb. Pepper Jack or Monterey Jack cheese, grated
1 ripe avocado, thinly sliced
1 cup pitted black olives, chopped
1 cup red bell peppers, chopped
1/2 lb. smoked or buffalo-style turkey, thinly sliced
Cherry tomatoes, quartered

Directions:

- Heat oven to 250 degrees. Wrap the tortillas in aluminum foil and warm them in the oven for about 10 minutes to soften. Or heat each tortilla in the microwave for 10 seconds.
- Make the sauce by combining the ranch dressing and barbecue sauce in a small bowl and stir until blended.
- Working with one wrapper at a time, layer each ingredient on half of the tortilla. Start with a bit of sauce, then add the lettuce, tomatoes, cheese, avocado, olives, and peppers, using as much of each as you like. End with a piece of the turkey. Fold in each side of the tortilla and begin rolling the wrap from the end with the filling. Tuck in the filling as you roll.
- Slice each sandwich in the center, on the bias, with a sharp serrated knife and serve.



Source: familyfun.com

FAST FUEL AND FUN FOR KIDS ON THE RUN!

RULES OF THE ROAD

PREPARE IN ADVANCE

Use plastic sandwich bags to pack snacks in small portions ahead of time. Take the bags with you when you head out the door and pull them out later for a quick energy fix.

- :: Baby carrots, celery sticks, broccoli bites, cherry tomatoes and whole grain cereals are great snacks to go.
- :: Mix and match your favorite cereal with dried fruit and sunflower seeds, peanuts, walnuts or sesame seeds for a fun trail mix.

- :: Try freezing little bags of grapes or blueberries ahead of time. The fruit still tastes great even if it thaws!

THINK PORTABLE

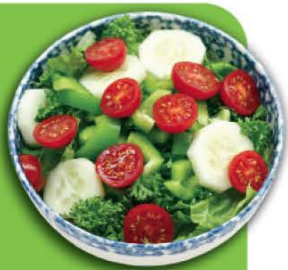
Don't have time to plan ahead?

- :: Consider fruits that come in Mother Nature's wrappers. Apples, pears, oranges and bananas as well as many other fruits are good when on the go.
- :: Keep a basket of fruit on the table so grabbing fruit for a snack is quick and easy.
- :: Look for snack-size packs of fresh vegetables at the store.

PLAN FOR THE LONG HAUL

Think about keeping a small stockpile of energy boosters packed in the car.

- :: A jar of peanut butter, a package of whole-wheat crackers, assorted nuts, canned fruit packed in light syrup or its own juice, some 100 percent juice boxes and bottled water won't wilt in the high heat and can stave off hunger pangs.
- :: Nuts, pretzels, animal and graham crackers and low fat granola won't spoil in the heat of our Texas weather either.

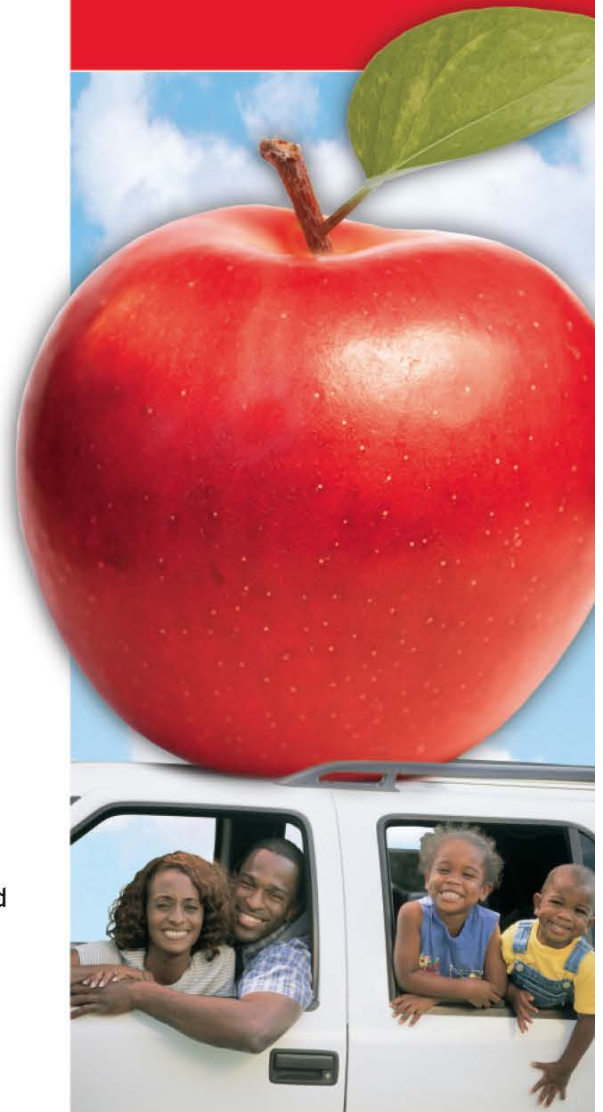


FAST
FUEL TIP:

Ask for a small side salad or fresh fruit instead of fries and ask for skim milk or water instead of soda when eating out at restaurants.

TEXAS FAMILIES ARE ALWAYS ON THE GO! NO MATTER WHAT YOUR PLANS ARE, YOU AND YOUR KIDS ARE GOING TO NEED PLENTY OF PEP. KEEP YOUR SNACKS AND MEALS LOADED WITH VITAMINS AND MINERALS FOR ENERGY. BE SURE TO EAT PLENTY OF DIFFERENT FRUITS AND VEGETABLES.

TRY THESE IDEAS FOR GREAT TASTING HEALTHY SNACKS AND QUICK MEAL TIPS TO HELP FUEL YOUR FUN.





SCHOOL MEALS FUEL FUN!

SCHOOL MEALS ARE NUTRITIOUS,
FAST, EASY AND AFFORDABLE.
CHILDREN WHO EAT BREAKFAST
AND LUNCH AT SCHOOL GET UP
TO 60 PERCENT OF THE DAILY
NUTRITION THEY NEED. TALK
TO THE SCHOOL FOOD SERVICE
DIRECTOR OR VISIT YOUR SCHOOL'S
WEB SITE FOR MENUS AND
INFORMATION. YOU CAN ALSO
CALL (888) TEX-KIDS FOR
SCHOOL MEAL PROGRAM DETAILS.

AT HOME ON THE RANGE

SPICE IT UP WITH PRODUCE

Fire up the barbeque and grill some delicious vegetables as the perfect side dish.

- :: Marinate fresh vegetables like squash, bell peppers, tomatoes, onions and mushrooms in fat-free Italian dressing and then place on skewers and barbecue or place the vegetables in aluminum foil and cook over medium hot coals.
- :: Try your favorite lean fajita meat with vegetables and salsa in a lettuce wrap instead of a tortilla.

KEEP IT FRESH

Use in-season fruits and vegetables for a just-picked taste.

- :: Carrots and cucumbers tossed with dark leafy greens make a super salad.
- :: Oranges and grapefruit add extra flavor to any leafy green salad.
- :: Create colorful kabobs by placing fresh fruit, such as strawberry, honeydew, cantaloupe and watermelon slices, on a skewer.

IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES

Once you start to think about it, the choices are almost endless for adding fruits and vegetables to your busy day.

- :: Chopped apples or oranges taste great in tuna or chicken salad. Green or red pepper strips and broccoli bites add crunch to your pasta.
- :: Add fresh spinach, tomato and onion on your sandwich.
- :: To start the day right, slice berries and peaches and place on top of cereal. You can also use fruit as a topping in place of butter and syrup on pancakes and waffles.



FUN KID- FRIENDLY TIP:

Whip up a quick smoothie with 100 percent fruit juice, low fat or fat-free milk or yogurt and fresh or frozen fruit.



square meals

Nourishing children's bodies and minds.

Visit www.squaremeals.org for healthy recipes, snack ideas and more. Square Meals is the Texas Department of Agriculture's school nutrition education and outreach program, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

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