



# HINTS FOR PREPARING SCHOOL LUNCHES

## PREPARING A LUNCH

Lunch is a great way to start teaching your child about the importance of healthy eating.

Lunch should provide one third of your child's daily nutrient needs. Healthy eating will:

- SUPPORT GROWTH
- PROVIDE ENERGY
- INCREASE LEARNING ABILITY
- INCREASE THE ABILITY TO FIGHT ILLNESS OR DISEASE

Healthy food choices and regular exercise can reduce the risk of developing high cholesterol, high blood pressure and obesity. In planning lunches with your child use:

- FOODS FROM THE FIVE GROUPS
- APPROPRIATE SERVING SIZES
- LOW FAT FOODS/ LOW CALORIE DRINKS
- VARIOUS FRUITS, VEGETABLES AND WHOLE GRAINS AS SNACK CHOICES

For a healthy lunch choose one item from each food group and check it off.



**provides calcium for bones and Teeth.**

*A serving is one cup of milk or 1 1/2 oz. of cheese -the size of the thumb*

### MILK

- Low-fat milk
- Low-fat Yogurt (Top with fruit or low-fat granola or any other unsweetened cereal)
- Reduced-fat cheese in salads or sandwiches
- Cottage cheese with fruit, vege-tables or salad
- Skim milk or low-fat puddings (homemade)
- Soy milk (choose those labeled 20-30% calcium)
- Orange juice fortified with calcium



**provide fiber, vitamins and minerals.**

*A serving is a piece of fruit or 1/2 cup canned -the size of a computer mouse*

### WHOLE FRUITS

- Various fresh fruit (continue to offer a variety of fruits to the picky eater)
- Fruits canned in light syrup or its own juices
- Dried fruit (apricots, apples, prunes, peaches or pears)



**provide fiber, vitamins and minerals.**

*A serving is 1/2 cup-the size of a computer mouse*

### VEGETABLES

- Vegetable sticks with a low-fat dip or dressing
- Vegetables in pasta salads or salad greens
- Vegetables added to sandwiches such as mushrooms, shredded carrots, cabbage or spinach
- Vegetables mixed in muffins, breads or pies (e.g. pumpkin bread)



**provide energy, fiber, vitamins and minerals.**

*A portion is two slices of bread, 1 pocket bread or roll, 1 cup pasta, rice or cereal- the size of a tennis ball*

### BREAD, PASTA & CEREAL

- Sandwich breads (whole wheat, multi-grain, rye, pumpernickel, soft tortillas or bagels)
- Variety breads (herbed, pita pockets, onion or raisin breads)
- Add whole grain breads with soups or salads
- Pasta and rice salads, soups or casseroles
- Unsweetened cereals make good snacks (add dried fruit to sweeten)



**provide protein for muscles and B vitamins.**

*A serving is 2-3 oz meat, fish, poultry, or 2 eggs, 1 cup cooked dry beans or 2 tbsp. Peanut butter.*

## MEAT & ALTERNATIVES

- Fish, egg, poultry, lean beef or leftover meats for sandwich filling
- Reduced fat cold cuts of meat
- Mashed beans seasoned with herbs is a good sandwich filling e.g. hummus
- Peanut butter combinations with celery, raisins, banana or pineapple
- Tofu sliced, diced, mashed and seasoned adds variety for sandwich filling.

(Remember mayonnaise, butter and cream cheese are high in fat so use sparingly, instead try low-fat or fat-free dressings or condiment spreads on sandwiches)

## HELPFUL TIPS

- Assist your child in making a list of foods from the food groups. Use this list to plan lunches.
- Allow your child to make his/her own lunch; they will be more likely to eat it.
- Add moisture to sandwiches without the fat; use lettuce, dark green leaves, salad vegetables or low fat cottage cheese blended with low fat yogurt.
- Make the sandwich the night before and refrigerate.
- Be creative with sandwiches and salads by varying colors, textures or shapes.
- Use leftovers for lunch.
- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Use an insulated thermos or ice pack; or freeze a container of yogurt and place in the bag to accomplish this.

## SNACKS

**Buy foods you want your child to eat!**

**Snacks should provide a good source of nutrition:**

- Choose snacks from the five food groups instead of the typical snack foods.
- Teach your child that all foods fit in a healthy diet and that typical snack foods are ***sometimes not everyday foods!***
- Avoid using food as a reward.

## CAUTION

**Do not put your child on a restricted diet! Restricting a child's diet may harm growth and development:**

- Do not eliminate foods from the five food groups from the diet. If your child is allergic to a food, substitute with foods of similar nutritional value.
- Provide appropriate serving sizes from the food groups.
- For picky eaters, serve small portions first, and then let your child ask for seconds.
- Do not confuse your child with adult size servings.
- Encourage exercise by providing alternate activities to watching television.
- Contact your health professional if you are concerned about your child's weight.

SAMPLE LUNCH	SAMPLE SNACK
3 oz. chicken or meat alternative In a pita pocket or 2 slices other whole grain bread Topped with ¼ c. grated carrots and ½ c. spinach leaves (1 Tbsp. low-fat salad dressing for dip) ½ large apple 6oz. yogurt 16 oz. water	1 c. popcorn ½ apple and 1Tbsp. peanut-butter 8 oz. water

TYPICAL SNACK CHOICES	ALTERNATIVES SNACK CHOICES
Potato chips, corn curls	Popcorn, pretzels, dry unsweetened cereal
Sweet rolls, doughnuts	Vegetable or fruit bread/ muffins, crackers
Chocolate chip cookies, cup cakes	Fig bars, ginger snaps, graham crackers
Sweetened drink boxes, sodas, drink	Water, milk