

Back To School Nutrition

Healthy Eating Tip Of The Month

September 2015

*** KIDS IN THE KITCHEN ***

*** BREAKFAST AND LUNCH: TWO MEALS WORTH CHEWING ON ***

*** BUILD A BETTER SNACK ***

*** FRUITS AND VEGGIES: 10 WAYS TO SERVE 'EM UP ***



Get your kids involved in preparing food and helping out in the kitchen! The more kids are exposed to food and cooking, the more likely they are to develop an interest in a variety of foods, and an appreciation for food and health. Here are some ways to include the little ones based on their age.

Preschoolers: 2-4 years

They are ready to learn kitchen “basics.” Their attention spans are short, so give them small tasks.

- * Stir, mash, mix, & whisk ingredients together.
- * Strain & rinse fruits and veggies
- * Pour premeasured ingredients
- * Roll cookie dough & use cookie cutters to shape the dough
- * Assemble toppings on pizza
- * Spreading nut butters or jams on bread
- * Frost cakes & cupcakes

Young Culinary Masters: 5-8 years

At this age, kids are perfecting their reading skills. Encourage their help with reading cookbooks & following recipes. Be sure to supervise if these guys are using the stove, oven, or knives.

- * Measure ingredients
- * Prepare easy-to-chop fruits & veggies
- * Use appliances such as can openers, blenders, toasters, or hand mixers.
- * Use the stove to make eggs (boiled, fried, scrambled, omelets), macaroni & cheese, pasta, or grilled cheese sandwiches
- * Heat up soups or frozen veggies
- * Read & understand food labels
- * Drying dishes & helping to put clean utensils away is also a great way to involve these guys.



Preteens: 9-12 years

Preteens are experts at following recipes, reading labels, & preparing simple dishes by themselves. Possessing basic knife skills, & using appliances without supervision are also skills this age group has typically mastered.

- * Bake quick breads, muffins, & cookies
- * Make measurement conversions & alter recipes
- * Use timers & thermometers
- * Make dinner by helping you plan, shop, prepare, & cook
- * Wash dishes & clean up

Teenage Master Chefs and Beyond: 13+ years

Teenagers should be able to cook and prepare meals on their own without much supervision. They have mastered the basics & are able to demonstrate their skills in the kitchen.

- * Mince, chop, dice, & prepare intricate & more complicated dishes.
- * Use the outdoor grill to prepare meats & veggies
- * Prepare meals for themselves & the family on their own.
- * Make lasagna from scratch
- * Create home made soups
- * Experiment with recipe substitutions



Sharing cooking knowledge is appropriate for kids at all ages!

Introduce names of ingredients.

Describe tastes, textures, & flavor combinations.

Brainstorm meal ideas together.

Taste things.

Discuss food labels, nutrients, and the importance of vitamins, minerals, and a balanced diet.

Breakfast and Lunch: Two meals worth chewing on!



It's been said that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Breaking the nighttime fast, breakfast revs up the metabolism and gives the body the energy it needs to start moving and thinking.

As for lunch, typically falling in the middle of the day, this meal provides the energy needed for kids to continue to think and concentrate well in school.

While it is important for everyone to eat a nutritious breakfast and lunch throughout the year, it is especially important as the school year starts back up again. As kids get ready to head back to school, being prepared with breakfast, lunch, and snack foods that will keep them energized and alert throughout the day is vital.

Thus, helping your kids start the day off with breakfast, and working with your kids to pack a healthy lunch that they will eat is imperative!

Tips & Tricks

Making Breakfast & Lunch Happen

1. **Involve your kids**— Give your kids 2-3 choices of foods they can eat for breakfast and lunch and ask them which choice they prefer. Bring them to the store with you and pick out foods together. Get your kids involved with preparing their breakfasts and packing their lunches.
2. **Plan & Prepare**—Buy foods that your kids will eat. Prepare foods the day before so your kids can easily grab what they need even if they are in a hurry.
3. **Be a Role Model**—Eat breakfast & lunch yourself. Studies have shown that children with parents that model healthy eating habits and practices are more likely to develop those same habits.

Building A Better Breakfast & Lunch

Start with Lean Protein: Protein provides long lasting energy that helps keep kids satisfied until snack time.

-Eggs, deli meat, cheese, yogurt, cottage cheese, hummus, beans, nut butters, a handful of nuts.

Grab Some Grains: Aim for whole grain products that provide extra nutrients, fiber, and longer lasting energy.

-Whole grain breads, muffins, English muffins, pancakes, cereal, tortillas, waffles, granola, oatmeal, crackers, pretzels, or chips.

Add in the Dairy: A great source of calcium for growing bones, dairy is an essential component for breakfast and lunch.

-Yogurt, cottage cheese, or milk.

Finish with Fresh Fruit (and/or Veggies): Aim for keeping seasonal fresh fruits and veggies on hand. Pre-slicing and preparing some of these fruits and veggies ahead of time will make it easier to add them to meals.

-Apples, bananas, pineapple, peaches, grapes, kiwi, mangoes, etc.

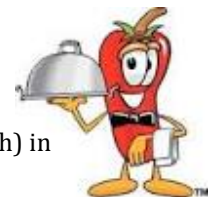
-If fresh isn't available, canned fruits are great as toppings on yogurt or waffles

-Chopped veggies pair nicely in omelets or on top of toast

Add a Treat and a Drink:

-It's ok to add a small piece of dark chocolate, fruit snacks, small cookie or brownie (at lunch) in moderation. Aim for 1-2 times per week.

-Encourage your child to drink water or milk



Other Things To Consider

When making breakfasts and lunch, it is important to keep in mind that kids eat with their eyes. Studies suggest that foods that look more appealing are more likely to be eaten by kids.

- Use cookie cutters to make foods into fun shapes
- Slice fruits and veggies to make them easier to eat
- Package foods in fun, colorful, reusable containers
- If using plastic lunch bags, tie them off with colorful ribbon
- Invest in a fun lunchbox for your child

Making breakfast and lunch fun is also a good way to grab your child's attention and encourage them to eat.

- Send little notes in your child's lunch box. Tell them you care about them or write out a small joke or fun fact.
- Send stickers
- Create a game out of it: have your child guess how many goldfish crackers are in his lunch, then have him count them and report back to you.
- Send some foods that are interactive: have your child build his own parfait or stack his own cheese and cracker sandwiches.

Banana in a Blanket

A great recipe for breakfast or lunch!



Prep Time: 5 min.

Ingredients

- 1 (6 inch) whole-wheat tortilla
- 1 Tbsp. nut butter
- 1 medium banana
- **1 Tbsp. maple syrup or honey
- **1 Tbsp. crunchy cereal or granola (**optional additions)

Instructions:

1. Lay tortilla on a plate.
2. Spread nut butter evenly on the tortilla.
3. Peel and lay the banana on the tortilla and roll the tortilla.
4. **Drizzle with maple syrup or honey, and top with granola or cereal if desired.

(Recipe from <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/>)

Peanut Butter & Jelly Smoothie

A healthy breakfast your kids are bound to love!



Prep Time: 5 min.

Ingredients:

- 1 medium banana, peeled, sliced
- 6 oz. plain Greek yogurt
- 1 cup frozen berries
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup milk (any type of milk)
- 1 Tbsp. peanut butter

Instructions:

1. Put all ingredients into the blender in the order they are listed.
2. Blend
3. Serve
4. Enjoy

(Recipe adapted from sallysbakingaddiction.com)

Tips To Building A Better Snack!

Snacks are a great way to provide energy between major meals as well as promote healthful eating. When it comes to choosing a snack, it is important to keep in mind that all foods were not created equal. Carbohydrates, fats, and proteins are the three main food groups. While carbohydrates can be considered “quick-energy” foods that are readily utilized by the body, proteins and fats can be considered “long-lasting energy” foods because it takes the body longer to metabolize and break them down.

Combining a quick-energy food with a long-lasting energy food makes for an ultimate snack that will satisfy hunger right away as well as in the long run.

What Snack Will You Create?

Three leading health organizations recommend that children have a fruit or vegetable at every snack. They also suggest that all grains should be whole grains with no artificial flavors. Pair items from column one with column two to create an energizing snack that is healthy and will satisfy hunger pains!

Protein & Dietary Fats

1. **Nut Butter** (Almond, Peanut, Sunflower, Cashew)
2. **Nuts** (Almonds, Cashews, Pistachios, Walnuts, Pecans, Macademia)
3. **Cheese** (Slices, String Cheese)
4. **Cottage Cheese**
5. **Yogurt**
6. **Milk**
7. **Lean Turkey**
8. **Grilled Chicken**
9. **Eggs** (Hard-Boiled, Scrambled, Fried)
10. **Seeds** (Pumpkin, Sunflower, Chia)
11. **Beans** (Black, Garbanzo, Navy, Pinto)
12. **Hummus**
13. **Dressing** (Ranch, Buttermilk, Thousand Island)
14. **Guacamole/Avocado**
15. **Mayonnaise**

1. **Fresh Veggies** (Celery, Carrots, Cucumber, Tomato, Snap Peas, Peppers)
2. **Fruit** (Apples, Banana, Oranges, Grapes, Strawberries, Blueberries, Cherries)
3. **Whole Grain Toast**
4. **Whole Grain Tortilla**
5. **Popcorn**
6. **Pretzels**
7. **Veggie Chips**
8. **Crackers**
9. **Dried Fruit** (Raisins, Cranberries, Mangos, Pineapple)
10. **Chocolate**
11. **Oatmeal**
12. **Quinoa/Rice**
13. **Granola**
14. **Sweet Potato/White Potato**

Carbohydrates (Complex & Simple)

Sample Ideas:

1. Top yogurt/cottage cheese with mixed berries
2. Spread nut butter on a banana, apple, or celery sticks & top with raisins or nuts
3. Dip fresh veggies in ranch, guacamole, or hummus
4. Create a trail mix combining nuts, seeds, dried fruit, chocolate, & popcorn
5. Bake a potato and top it with melted cheese
6. Make a quesadilla with cheese, black beans and a whole grain tortilla
7. Create a skewer with cheese cubes, & grapes, pineapple, or strawberries
8. Toast a slice of whole grain bread and top it with a fried egg & fresh avocado
9. Combine milk & frozen berries to create a smoothie
10. Make a wrap by rolling grilled chicken, cucumber, & mayo in a whole grain tortilla



Fruits & Veggies: 10 Kid-Friendly Ways To Serve 'em Up!



It is important for kids to learn to make healthy choices when it comes to what they eat! Recommendations call for children to consume an average of 5 servings of fruits and veggies daily.

According to research, vegetables are the least liked food category among children, which doesn't make our goal easy.

However, studies have shown that with regular exposure, by offering variety, and by preparing fruits and vegetables in fun ways, children will be more likely to eat and enjoy these foods.

1. Bake 'em

Baking is a great way to mix fruits & vegetables into foods that kids will already eat.

-Make muffins by mixing bananas, apples, strawberries, blueberries, zucchini, sweet potatoes, or carrots into the batter.

-Mix black beans into brownies or white beans into chocolate chip cookies.



2. Grill 'em

Light up the grill & use it to alter the texture of fruits and veggies in order to make them more appealing to kids. Grilling enhances the flavor of various fruits and vegetables by reducing the water content & allowing the unique flavor profiles to become more pronounced.

-Try grilling watermelon, pineapple, peaches, & pears.

-Zucchini, tomatoes, mushrooms, onions, peppers, & corn also make great grilling candidates.



5. Dip 'em

Kids are more likely to accept new foods when they are paired with foods they already like. By pairing vegetables with dips that kids already like, the new veggies are well received by way of association.

-Make guacamole from avocados and dip carrots, celery, peppers, or cucumbers in it.



4. Mix 'em

Another way to include vegetables is to chop them up and blend them into sauces.

-Blend carrots, kale, broccoli, or spinach & stir them into tomato sauce to throw on top of spaghetti.

-Blend up cauliflower & add it to an alfredo or other white sauce.



3. Freeze 'em

Kids enjoy foods that are prepared in unique shapes and sizes. Freezing fruits for snacks is a sweet way to add variety to your child's diet.

-Frozen grapes, cherries, raspberries, or blueberries make great snacks on their own or as add-ins to smoothies.

-Bananas can be frozen & turned into popsicles. Covering them with chocolate, peanut butter, yogurt and various toppings such as nuts, shredded coconut, chocolate chips, etc. make these treats extremely tasty & kid-friendly.



7. Blend 'em

There is a reason blenders are popular right now. They can be used to make a variety of nutrient dense smoothies. Helping your child build-his-own-smoothie is a great way to get him to try fruits & vegetables.

- Frozen fruits make great thick smoothies.
- Kale, celery, cucumber, avocados, spinach, & carrots are popular veggie add-ins.
- Be creative & mix it up!



6. Dry 'em out

One way to transform basic fruits & vegetables is by turning them into chips!

- Slice the fruits & veggies thinly, and then bake them in the oven.
- Add a little olive oil, salt, & other spices to add a sweet, spicy, or savory flavor.
- You can make chips out of carrots, kale, beets, tomatoes, zucchini, bananas, apples, etc.
- Dried fruit can be added to trail mixes or sprinkled on top of yogurt or oatmeal.
- Raisins, dried pineapple, mango, blueberries, apples, & cranberries are a few good examples.

8. Chop 'em up

Kids tend to be more receptive to fruits & veggies if they are cut into interesting shapes & sizes.

- Have fun & experiment with cutting up fruits & veggies in unique ways that your child will find interesting and easy to eat.



9. Disguise 'em

When kids aren't aware that what they are eating is healthy, they may be more likely to eat it.

- Make cookie dough out of chickpeas.
- Blend avocados with unsweetened cocoa powder to make pudding.
- Blend frozen bananas with a little bit of milk to make "ice cream."
- Transform cauliflower into mashed potatoes, rice, tater tots, or popcorn.
- Cook spaghetti squash or thinly sliced zucchini and use them to replace noodles in traditional dishes.

10. Dress 'em up

Sometimes plain veggies are boring, but who can say no to beautified fruit and veggies? After all, most people eat with their eyes first.

- Enhance celery by topping it with nut butter and raisins to make the classic "ants-on-a-log."
- Slice apples into circles and spread peanut butter between the slices to make "apple sandwiches."



Give some of these tips a try & you might just make your child into a fruit & veggie fan!

Easiest Chocolate Mousse



Serves 2-3

- 1 large avocado (3/4-1 cup, mashed)
- 1/4-1/3 cup hot cocoa mix
- *pinch of salt
- * a few drops vanilla extract
- (*optional ingredients)

Directions:

1. Combine the ingredients in a large mixing bowl. Using a fork, mash the large chunks of avocado. Mash very well before blending.
2. Using a hand or stand mixer, whip avocado with the cocoa until smooth and creamy.
3. Add in any optional ingredients.
4. Transfer to serving dish(es).
5. Chill in the fridge for at least twenty minutes before serving.
6. Can be made a day in advance and stored in the fridge, covered.
7. Devour and enjoy!

****When serving, can top with optional garnishes such as fruit, granola, or chopped nuts.**

(Recipe from Happy.Happy.Life Blog by Kathy Patafsky)

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For additional information, check out these sources.

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