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Nutrition Notes – September 2008

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Healthy Snacks & Lunches

Are you struggling to strike a balance between healthy food options and your child's picky eating habits? Healthy lunches and snacks are important because they help with concentration and learning. Healthy eating changes are not always easy to make. Try to set a good example with your own lunches. Encourage children to be involved in their own lunch preparation, and their choices about foods to include. Praise your child when they choose healthy foods for the lunch box. Eating a variety of foods gives children and adults the best chance of obtaining a balanced diet. Select foods from all the food groups every day if possible. Below are some ideas to make your life easier and ensure that your children have good, wholesome food.

IDEAS:

- Reduced fat cheese slices or cubes. (Ex: Kraft String Ums 2% milk string cheese.)
- Yogurt - plain or fruit yogurt. Freeze a tub of yogurt and put in your child's lunch box. By lunchtime it will be ready to eat. (Ex: Organic Horizon yogurt tubes.)
- Fresh or canned fruit in natural juice is a good choice. Try grapes, cherries, avocados, pineapple or any fruit in season, or dried, no added sugar raisins, apricots, cranberries, mango.
- Try vegetables such as carrots, broccoli, tomatoes, celery, cucumbers, etc...with dip. (Ex: low-fat ranch, hummus, peanut butter – natural with no preservatives or sugar.) Another favorite is celery filled with peanut, almond or cashew butter.
- Baked pita chips or whole wheat flat bread - dipped in hummus, is a real treat as well as pasta salad with fresh vegetables (see recipe below).
- When baking treats, go for those prepared with whole and 7-grain cereals, fruit purees, and add nuts, seeds and fruit (see recipe below). To add needed protein try; hard-boiled eggs, organic or nitrite-free sliced meat, falafel or lentil patties, bean salad, chicken or tuna salad with chopped veggies, raisin and sunflower seeds served in cabbage or lettuce wraps or in a hollowed tomato.
- Homemade trail mix, with fruits, nuts & wholegrain un-sugared cereals make an excellent snack.

Pasta salad with fresh vegetables:

1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
½ cup shredded carrots
1 red bell peppers, chopped
6 ounces Fusilli pasta, cooked, drained and cooled
1 cup baby spinach leaves, washed and dried
3 ounces Fresh Mozzarella
1/2 cup Grape Tomatoes, cut in half
1/2 small red onion, thinly sliced
1 tablespoons chopped fresh basil
1/4 cup Balsamic Vinaigrette
sea salt, to taste
freshly ground pepper, to taste

Directions:

In a large bowl, toss all ingredients together. Season with salt and pepper.

Super-Duper Keep You Regular Healthy Muffins

¾ cup 100% whole wheat flour
¾ cup whole 7-grain, high fiber cereal
½ cup brown sugar
1 tsp baking powder
½ tsp baking soda
1 tsp cinnamon
1 med ripe banana, mashed
½ cup plain-yogurt or buttermilk
1 egg
2 T vegetable oil (not corn or soy)
½ tsp vanilla extract
½ cup shredded carrots
½ cup chopped dates
½ cup chopped walnuts

Directions:

Mix together dry ingredients. Mix liquid ingredients in separate bowl. Combine the two mixtures and stir until moistened. Fold in carrots, dates, and walnuts. Line a muffin tin with paper cups. Fill 2/3 full and bake at 375 degrees for 15-18 minutes. Makes 12. Eventually you'll double the recipe because these will not last!

For more tips on healthy eating and taking the agony out of food sensitivities call:

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