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(Fitness, Education Nutrition)
Newsletter
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Nutrition for Growing Bodies

Do you want to raise happy, healthy and successful kids? Children and teens need the right fuel for growing, learning and developing. This means foods and beverages with plenty of nutrients (protein, fiber, vitamins and minerals) and not too many calories, fats or sugars.

The secret to feeding a healthy family is to serve delicious nutrient-rich foods at every meal and snack. When children fill up on the right stuff – high quality nutrition for their bodies and brains – they will naturally have less room for the nutrient-poor choices (soft drinks, chips, candy, desserts).

Here are some quick and easy ways to serve children high-octane choices from every food group, morning, noon and night.

Whole-Grain Foods with Carbohydrates, Fiber, B-Vitamins and More

Whole grains pack a lot of nutritional value. In recent years, there has been an explosion of new grain products on grocery shelves. With so many options, it's hard to know which ones to pick. Choose items that list whole grains as the first or second ingredient on the label. Give kids whole-grain cereals for breakfast, kid-friendly "white" whole-wheat bread for sandwiches, crunchy whole-grain crackers for snacks and whole-grain pastas for dinner.

Fruits and Vegetables with Antioxidants, Vitamins A and C, Potassium and Fiber

You can't go wrong with fruits and vegetables: fresh, frozen, canned, dried and 100 percent juice. For kids and adults alike, eating more fruits and vegetables at every meal is important for health. At breakfast, enjoy fresh or frozen berries on cereal, slices of melon or a glass of 100 percent orange juice; at lunch, serve crunchy baby carrots or sliced apples; for dinner, put brightly colored vegetables (broccoli, corn, sliced peppers, frozen peas or leafy green salad) at the center of every plate.

Low-fat Dairy Foods with Protein, Calcium, Potassium, Magnesium and Phosphorus

The nutrients in this group are important for kids, but most young people in America are not getting enough calcium or potassium. Fortunately, it's easy to consume the three daily dairy servings that children and teens need. There are many nutrient-rich, low-fat dairy products to choose from: an 8-ounce glass of low-fat milk with breakfast, lunch and dinner; yogurt parfaits for breakfast or an after-school snack; or string cheese for an on-the-go energy snack.

Lean Meat/Poultry/Fish/Eggs/Beans/Nuts with Protein, Iron, Zinc and B-Vitamins

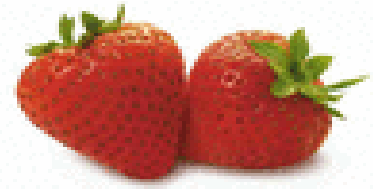
Whether it's growing muscles or active brains, these nutrients top the list for children. Getting enough protein at every meal and snack helps with extending satiety (feeling comfortably satisfied after eating).

While most kids eat plenty of protein at lunch and dinner, they don't necessarily get their protein fix with breakfast or snacks. Start their day with eggs, bean burritos or last night's leftovers. For snacks, provide nuts, peanut butter or other nut butters or sliced deli meat.



Fruit of the Month: Strawberries

Delicious and nutritious: strawberries are rich in antioxidants and flavonoids. Low in calories and high in vitamins, strawberries are a perfect choice for a snack. They may also help prevent cancer and heart disease! :) Wash them and eat them plain or slice them and stir into low-fat vanilla yogurt! Add to green salads for a sweet taste. Any way you use them - they are a seasonal favorite!



March is National Nutrition Month - Celebrate by “Eating The Rainbow”

Dazzle your kids with color! Eating fruits and veggies in a variety of colors - red, dark green, yellow, blue, purple, white and orange - not only provides eye candy for your kids but mixing things up also gives them a broad range of nutrients. So "think variety, think color" and everybody wins! And they can have a little fun filling up that shopping cart with a spectrum of colorful fruits and vegetables that'll create a rainbow on their plates!

Red Fruits and Vegetables - Contain nutrients such as lycopene, ellagic acid, Quercetin, and Hesperidin, to name a few. These nutrients reduce the risk of prostate cancer, lower blood pressure, reduce tumor growth and LDL cholesterol levels, scavenge harmful free-radicals, and support joint tissue in arthritis cases.

Orange and Yellow Fruits and Vegetables - Contain beta-carotene, zeaxanthin, flavonoids, lycopene, potassium, and vitamin C. These nutrients reduce age-related macula degeneration and the risk of prostate cancer, lower LDL cholesterol and blood pressure, promote collagen formation and healthy joints, fight harmful free radicals, encourage alkaline balance, and work with magnesium and calcium to build healthy bones.

Green Vegetables and Fruit - Green vegetables contain chlorophyll, fiber, lutein, zeaxanthin, calcium, folate, vitamin C, calcium, and Beta-carotene. The nutrients found in these vegetables reduce cancer risks, lower blood pressure and LDL cholesterol levels, normalize digestion time, support retinal health and vision, fight harmful free-radicals, and boost immune system activity.

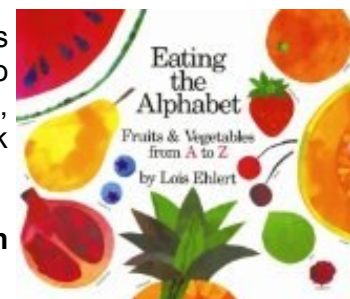
Blue and Purple Fruits and Vegetables

Contain nutrients which include lutein, zeaxanthin, vitamin C, fiber, flavonoids, ellagic acid, and quercetin. Similar to the previous nutrients, these nutrients support retinal health, lower LDL cholesterol, boost immune system activity, support healthy digestion, improve calcium and other mineral absorption, fight inflammation, reduce tumor growth, act as an anticarcinogens in the digestive tract, and limit the activity of cancer cells.

White Fruits and Vegetables

Contain nutrients such as beta-glucans, EGCG, SDG, and lignans that provide powerful immune boosting activity. These nutrients also activate natural killer B and T cells, reduce the risk of colon, breast, and prostate cancers, and balance hormone levels, reducing the risk of hormone-related cancers.

For a fun, educational reading experience - try this book with your children!



For more information about fitness, education and nutrition, contact Grace Keith, Health Educator, Wakulla County Health Department. 850.926.0400, x. 215 or [Grace_Keith @doh.state.fl.us](mailto:Grace_Keith@doh.state.fl.us)

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