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Parent Newsletter Insert: September 2007

Grab, Go and Grow: Healthy School Snacks

That time has rolled around again ... snacks need making and lunches need packing. With all the chores of the day, who has time to organize nutritious snacks? Today's parents are time-stressed and in many cases forced to be multi-taskers, but savvy parents also know that putting together healthy snacks is not rocket science. In fact, healthy snacks can be quick and easy!

Tips for Being a Super Healthy Snack Shopper

- buy an assortment of fruits and vegetables, cut them up and stow them away
- choose unsweetened applesauce or fruit cups packed in unsweetened fruit juice
- look for whole grain crackers or bagels to combine with nut butter or cheese
- select low fat cheese sticks or yogurt to accompany fruit
- choose pre-washed baby carrots or snap peas, add a yogurt dip
- accompany whole wheat pita with ready to serve hummus
- choose granola bars with dried fruits and nuts
- buy cereals low in sugar to snack on
- pick up some dried fruit, mini pretzels, nuts, seeds to add to unsweetened cereal to make your own trail mix
- stock up on yogurt & granola to add to fruit for a yummy parfait



Public Health Nutrition Program

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Parent Newsletter Insert: September, October or November 2007

Healthy Lunches

To prepare a healthy lunch, stick to the basics. Choose one food from each column below. Cut and peel fruit so that it is quick and easy to eat. Include water or milk to drink.



Fruit	Vegetable	Grains	Protein
Orange	Snow Peas	Whole grain bread	Sliced turkey
Strawberries	Red or Green Pepper slices	Pita	Cheese stick
Cantaloupe	Carrots & dip	Bagel	Hard boiled egg
Watermelon	Cucumber circles	Pasta	Sliced ham
Blueberries	Radishes	Whole Wheat Tortilla	Cold chick peas
Asian Pear	Celery sticks	Brown rice	Canned salmon or tuna
Banana		Roti	Hummus
Mango			Cottage Cheese
Apple			Nut butter
Raisins			



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Parent Newsletter Insert: Any Month 2007/08

Walk to School

Walking to school is a great idea. Your family will get exercise, spend time together, enjoy fresh air, and save money on gas for the car. To get in the habit of walking to school, try the following:

- Set the alarm clock earlier for the same amount of time it takes to walk to school
- Organize jackets, shoes/boots, umbrellas, backpacks, books, gym gear, etc. the night before
- Plan to leave for school earlier than usual to have time for the walk

Walk with neighbours and friends for some extra social time.



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Parent Newsletter Insert: October 2007

Guidelines for Food & Beverage Sales in BC Schools

Many parents have already heard about the Guidelines for Food & Beverage Sales in BC Schools. But few have a clear idea of exactly what the guidelines are and how they will make your school healthier for students.

The guidelines, developed jointly by the Ministry of Health & the Ministry of Education, apply to all food that is sold in schools. This includes: vending machines, school cafeterias, school stores/tuck shops, PAC/school organized lunches, food sold as a fundraiser and special event food sales (i.e. a canteen on Sports Day). They DO NOT include food brought from home.

Foods are classified according to their nutritional value as either 'Choose Most', 'Choose Sometimes', 'Choose Least' or 'Not Recommended'. When being classified, sugar, salt and fat content are considered as well as other nutrients. The guidelines require that of total food choices, at least 50% of items must be 'Choose Most' items. 'Choose Sometimes' foods may represent 40-50% of choices and 'Choose Least' foods may make up only 10%. Foods in the 'Not Recommended' category will not be permitted for sale. These foods are simply too low in nutrients, have too many unhealthy components or are too highly processed. Schools are expected to be fully on board with the Guidelines by 2009. A copy of the Guidelines may be downloaded from: http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/health/guidelines_sales.pdf.



Questions pertaining to the guidelines may be directed to your school nutritionist at: phnutrition@fraserhealth.ca.



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Parent Newsletter Insert: Any Month 2007/08

Cut Back on 'Junk Food'

The best way to help your family eat less 'junk food' is to keep it out of the house. Suggestions for how to get home from grocery shopping with healthy choices are:

- Shop on a full stomach; you'll be less likely to buy on impulse and more choosy about the foods you buy
- Create a shopping list and stick to it
- Buy more fruit and vegetables than you usually do
- Remove any treat foods such as tortilla chips, sugary drinks, cookies, or fruity candies that managed to find their way into your shopping cart before you get to the check out.



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Parent Newsletter Insert: November 2007



What's All the Hype About Vitamin D?

Earlier this year a study came out linking “the sunshine vitamin” to cancer prevention. As soon as the article came out Vitamin D supplements flew off pharmacy shelves across the country. So what's all the hype?

The role of Vitamin D in preventing of osteoporosis (bone loss) has long been established but recent research indicates that vitamin D may play an important role in many other aspects of health including: multiple sclerosis, diabetes, arthritis, high blood pressure, heart disease, crohn's disease, immune function and more.

The measurement unit for Vitamin D is International Units (IU's). Health Canada currently recommends 200 IU's of Vitamin D per day for people 1 - 50 years old. Many nutritionists are concerned that many Canadians are not meeting this recommendation through diet alone but care must be taken if supplementing as there is a tolerable upper level intake of 2000 IU's per day. Until Health Canada has reviewed all the scientific evidence regarding Vitamin D, it is advisable to follow the aforementioned recommendation.



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Parent Newsletter Insert: Any Month 2007/08

Kids in the Kitchen

Teaching your kids to cook will help them appreciate food and think more about what they eat. Enjoy some quality time with your kids while teaching them this important life-skill.

Start with something simple and yummy, like cookies. Move on to soups and salads. Don't worry if the recipe doesn't turn out perfect – have fun!



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Parent Newsletter Insert: December 2007

Caffeine and Kids

Confused about caffeine and your kids? Caffeine has the same stimulant effects on children and teens as it does on adults, though these effects can be stronger in children because their bodies are smaller. Caffeine side effects can prevent children from doing well in school, they include:

- irritability and restlessness
- difficulty concentrating
- afternoon sleepiness



Caffeine can be found in some soft drinks (colas, some root beers), chocolate, coffee, tea, iced mocha drinks and some other drinks (the name usually includes the words “energy”, “rush”, “adrenaline”, “bull”). Caffeine is not always listed in the ingredient list but caffeine containing ingredients to look for include:

- coffee or coffee beans (not coffee flavoring)
- green or black tea leaves
- guarana
- yerba
- cocoa beans



Children and adolescents can also experience withdrawal symptoms such as headaches, irritability and restlessness. Be sure to stock beverages at home with little or no caffeine, this will make the better choices easier for everyone! Your best options are water, milk, 100% fruit juice.



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Parent Newsletter Insert: Any Month 2007/08

Meal Time is Family Time

Kids from families who eat together three or more times a week are more likely to do better at school, and less likely to be involved in high risk activities such as smoking, fighting and drugs. Kids are also more likely to eat healthy foods. Suggestions are to:

- Expect the whole family eat dinner together
- Serve dinner at a time when everyone is home
- Turn off the television and don't answer the telephone during dinner
- Encourage conversation. Have family members share one positive thing that happened to them that day.



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Parent Newsletter Insert: January 2008



Eat Your Fruit & Veggies

Eating more from the vegetable and fruit food group is one of the key messages in Canada's revised Food Guide. Children 4 - 8 years old need 5 - 6 servings of fruit & vegetables in their diet. Children 9 – 13 years should have 6 servings per day while those 14 - 18 years old require 7 - 8 servings daily.

Try some of these helpful tips on getting more fruit and vegetables into your kids:

- offer a variety of different veggies i.e. radishes, broccoli or cauliflower florets, snow peas, peppers or cucumber
- keep a fruit salad on hand; make juicy by adding a bit of apple juice, orange juice or yogurt
- offer vegetables raw if your child turns away from cooked or only cook to crunchy
- try cutting vegetables in different shapes, carrot coins or cucumber sticks for example
- for the highly resistant, camouflage vegetables by pureeing them into other menu items like soups and pasta sauces
- try some new & unusual fruit and vegetables - bok choy, gai lan, casava, okra, bitter melon, passion fruit, pomegranate, or star fruit
- cut up and plate your fruit and veggie snacks ... a colourful display often tempts children
- remember, likes and dislikes change - your child may have to sample a fruit or vegetable several times before accepting it



And don't forget eat a variety of fruit and vegetables yourself, that way you'll be a healthy role model for your entire family!

For your copy of Canada's Food Guide contact: phnutrition@fraserhealth.ca .



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Parent Newsletter Insert: February 2008

February is Eating Disorder Awareness Month

Watch your language - parents' words are a key factor in the prevention of eating disorders. To reduce the chance of your child developing an eating disorder, keep the following in mind:

- Avoid complaining about your body, particularly in front of children. Don't talk about calories, diets and weight.
- Emphasize your child's talents and qualities. Don't focus on their physical appearance.
- Avoid comments about your child's weight, especially when they can hear you speaking.
- Live with a positive attitude to body image, not with a focus on food and weight.



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Parent Newsletter Insert: February 2008

February is Eating Disorder Awareness Month

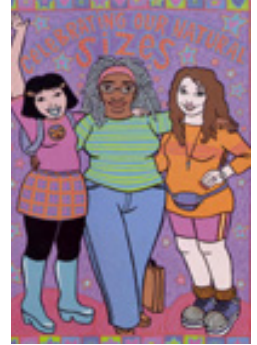
Today, in a society that places high value on thinness, eating problems such as bulimia, anorexia and overeating are evident. In striving for the ideal body many forget that, regardless of their size and shape, people deserve to be respected.

Helping your children develop a healthy attitude about weight, body image and self-esteem can prevent disordered eating.

To help your child acquire a healthy attitude towards food:

- Be aware of what you say about size and weight.
- Have a look at your own food and weight attitudes - if you worry about what the scale says and start to skip meals, your child will notice.
- Offer small, nutritious snacks. Small stomachs have small capacities; your child can always ask for more food if she is still hungry.
- Refrain from forcing your child to clean his plate; when he is done eating - he is done!
- Avoid using food as rewards; positive words and hugs are a better offering.

Remember, parents are the number one influence on children's eating habits. Those who eat healthy meals and are physically active provide positive role models for their children.



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Parent Newsletter Insert: April, May or June 2008

Liquid Candy

Two little known facts: One 591 ml bottle of pop has an incredible 18 teaspoons of sugar. Juice has about the same amount of sugar as pop. To reduce overall sugar (and excess calorie) intake:

- Be a role model; choose water or milk to drink
- Remove pop from your grocery list
- Limit juice to one 125 ml (1/2 cup) or less a day
- Serve milk instead of pop on special occasions and allow children to add a squirt of chocolate or other flavouring
- Let your child pick out a fun thermos or water bottle and get them to fill it with water or milk for school



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Parent Newsletter Insert: March 2008



Energy Drinks: Are they Safe?

Energy drinks are becoming more and more popular these days. Some well known products are: Red Bull, Rockstar, Full Throttle, Monster, SoBe Adrenaline Rush, and SoBe No Fear. These drinks are often being marketed to provide a “legal buzz” and claim to “restore mental awareness”. But be warned these drinks are not safe for children. These drinks are laden with caffeine, vitamins, minerals, herbs, and very high concentrations of sugar.

Energy drinks should not be confused with sports drinks (i.e. Gatorade). Sports drinks are designed to hydrate the body whereas energy drinks have dehydrating effects. Energy drinks contain toxic levels of additives for children and can cause side effects like: trouble sleeping, irritability, concentration difficulties, headaches, restlessness, dehydration, nausea and vomiting, and heart irregularities.

Most energy drinks contain at least 80mg of caffeine, and other additives like taurine, guarana, Yerba mate, and glucuronolactone. Yerba mate and guarana contain caffeine, and taurine and glucuronolactone are stimulants which have similar effects. It is being found that teenagers are becoming addicted to these drinks and end up on a jolt and crash cycle.

According to Health Canada, the recommendations for caffeine intake should be no more than 45mg for children aged 4-6, 62.5mg for children aged 7-9, and 85mg for children aged 10-12.

Remember - energy drinks are not designed for children; they contain inappropriate amounts of caffeine and sugar they not considered safe for children.



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Parent Newsletter Insert: March or April 2008 ("Turn off the TV Week" is in April)

Turn off the TV, Turn on Life!

Having a tough time getting your kids to turn off the TV? Try the following:

- Read the TV listings together to have your child choose one show to watch each day. Allow your child to enjoy the show and then turn the TV off.
- Designate certain days of the week as "TV Free Days".
- Remove the TV from your child's bedroom.

You will find your children will complain less if you are consistent with these rules.



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Parent Newsletter Insert: April 2008

Meal Times are Fun for the Whole Family!

Getting the family together to eat a meal is a great way to de-brief after a busy day and catch up on recent activities. Family meals not only offer time for talk and laughter, they provide a setting for so much more! Parents who eat meals with their children are able to demonstrate healthy food choices, pass on family values and traditions. In addition, such families typically communicate better as a family. Children benefit from sharing family meals in many ways including:

- improved vocabulary and communication skills
- better performance in school
- fewer behavioral problems
- getting more essential vitamins and minerals
- being less likely to try marijuana, cigarettes or alcohol
- less chance of embarking on unhealthy weight control practices
- decreased risk of having low self-esteem



After a hectic day, stick to simple, easy to prepare meals for your. Use teamwork to get the meal on the table. Children can be included in meal planning, grocery shopping, preparation and even clean-up. To enhance your meal time, get rid of the competition – turn off the computer, TV and let the answer machine pick up phone calls. Set aside this time to enjoy your family and make it a goal to so on a routine basis!



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Parent Newsletter Insert: Any Month 2007/08

Make Healthy Snacks Easy Snacks

Keep ready-to-eat healthy snacks available and kids will eat them.

Set aside time after grocery shopping to prepare ahead:

- wash and cut fresh veggies like snap peas, broccoli, and cauliflower
- prepare fruits by quartering oranges, slicing watermelon, and washing grapes
- keep ready-to-eat foods on hand such as rinsed canned chickpeas, hard-boiled eggs, trail mix, bean dip, yogurt, and slices of cheese



Store prepared snacks in the fridge in clear plastic containers so they will be easily seen.



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Parent Newsletter Insert: May 2008

Nutrition for the Sporty Ones



Athletes are like race cars; they don't run their best if you don't put proper fuel in them. Active people need to fuel their body. As an athlete, this means making sure you eat food containing carbohydrates, protein and yes, even some fat.

When it's time to exercise, you'll get energy from the foods you've been eating all week, but it's still a good idea to eat well on that day. A meal should be eaten 1½ - 3 hours before exercise to allow time to digest. For long practices, competitions, or all-day events your body will need a snack to keep you going. Eating right after exercise "reloads the muscles" for the next set of training or competition. Rapid recovery of fuel to the muscle after exercise is a basic nutrition goal for all athletes.

Hydration is very important during exercise. Drinking before, during, and after exercising is the best way to stay hydrated and water is the best fluid to choose. Sport drinks (and other electrolyte drinks) are usually not necessary unless the exercise period exceeds one hour.

The best foods for athletes are high carbohydrate foods like vegetables, fruit, breads, cereals, rice or other grain products. It is wise avoid sugary stuff like pop or candy bars, they might provide a little energy boost, but fade fast leaving you feeling drained. Sports bars, or energy bars, are convenient, but they aren't necessary for athletes. You can get the same energy from healthy foods.

For more detailed information on sports nutrition download the '**Sports Nutrition Kit**' at www.fraserhealth.ca - search 'school nutrition'.



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Parent Newsletter Insert: March, April or May 2008

Home Grown Foods

Want your child to eat more vegetables? Try growing a simple vegetable garden with your kids. Easy plants to grow include peas, lettuce, strawberries and squash. Plant the seeds between mid-April and the end of May. The produce you grow will be fresh, free of pesticides, and save you money at the supermarket.



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Parent Newsletter Insert: June 2008



What's In Your Drink?

Summer is coming and that means some long hot days are in store ... and some thirsty kids! We often give our kids beverages without thinking too much about what they contain. But when you look carefully at some favourite thirst quenchers you will be startled to discover that many are laden with sugar and offer little else in the way of nutrition.

Beverage	Size	Amount of Sugar (tsp)	Any Other Nutrition?
Milk	1 glass (250 mL)	3	Yes, protein, vitamins & minerals
Starbucks Caffe Latte	Tall (12 oz)	4	Yes, protein, vitamins & minerals
Chocolate Milk	Small Carton (250 mL)	7	Yes, protein, vitamins & minerals
100% Juice	Juice Box (200 mL)	6	Yes, vitamins & minerals
Fruit Flavoured Beverage	Juice Box (200 mL)	6	None
Red Bull	1 can (250 mL)	6	Contains 80 mg caffeine per can
Tim Horton's Iced Capp	Small (10 oz)	8	Some protein, vitamins & minerals
Starbucks Coffee Frapp	Tall (12 oz)	8	Some minerals (calcium, sodium)
Sunny D®	250 ml	8½	None
Pop (Non-Diet)	1 can (355 mL)	10	None
Powerade	1 bottle (710 mL)	17	Some minerals (electrolytes)
Sobe Fruit Drink	1 bottle (600 mL)	21	Some vitamins & minerals
Slurpee	Medium (828 mL)	22	None
Super Big Gulp (7/11)	Large (1.2 L)	32	None

The best thirst quenchers are water and milk ... encourage your children to opt for these more often.



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Parent Newsletter Insert: Any Month 2007/08

Choose Your Milk!

Did you know that 2%, 1%, skim, and chocolate milk all have the same amount of calcium? Fortified soy milk also has about as much calcium as regular milk. Choose your favourite milk and enjoy. Your bones will love it!



Canada's Food Guide recommends the equivalent of 2 cups of milk per day for children 4 - 8 years old, whereas youth 9 - 18 years old should aim for 3 - 4 cups per day.



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