

March is National Nutrition Month
9 Steps to a Great Lunch

1. **Clean hands!** Wash your hands before preparing food and eating it.
2. **Choose fruits and vegetables.** Fruits and vegetables are packed with vitamins and fiber. It's a good idea to eat five servings of fruits and vegetables every day. A serving of carrots would be just 10 sticks. A fruit serving could be one medium orange or a box of 100% fruit juice.
3. **Know the facts about fat.** Kids need some fat in their diets to stay healthy, but you don't want to eat too much of it. Fat is found in butter, oils, cheese, nuts, and meats. Some higher-fat lunch foods include French fries, hot dogs, cheeseburgers, macaroni and cheese, and chicken nuggets. Don't worry if you like these foods! No food is bad, but you may want to eat them less often and in smaller portions. Some of the best low-fat foods are fruits, vegetables, and skim or low-fat milk.
4. **Let whole grains reign.** "Grains" include breads, cereals, rice, and pasta. What's the difference between whole grains and refined grains? Whole grains have more nutritional value, including fiber that can help prevent obesity. Brown rice and whole wheat bread are whole grains. White rice and 100% white bread are not.
5. **Slurp sensibly.** It's not just about what you eat - drinks count, too! Milk has been a favorite lunchtime drink for a long time. If you don't like milk, choose water or 100% juice (be sure to count it as a fruit serving!) Avoid juice drinks and sodas – they have LOTS of sugar, and less nutritional value.
6. **Balance your lunch.** Pack a lunch that includes a mix of food groups: some grains, some fruits, some vegetables, some meat or protein foods, and some dairy foods such as milk and cheese.
7. **Steer clear of packaged snacks.** Many packaged chips and cookies are very high in fat and salt or sugar. Try some lower fat/sugar/salt snacks such as pretzels, raisins, or homemade trail mix.
8. **Mix it up.** Eating lots of different kinds of food gives your body a variety of nutrients.
9. **Use Manners.** Chew with mouth closed. Don't talk and eat at the same time to prevent spitting your food or choking. Use utensils. Put a napkin on your lap. Be polite. And don't make fun of what someone else is eating.

Respectfully,
Annette Johansen, RN
Steller School Nurse

Resources: - www.kidshealth.org; www.eatright.org