

Nutrition Tidbits



Fall Power Snacks

- Apple or banana with peanut, almond or cashew butter
- Cut up raw veggies with low-fat salad dressing or a cheese stick
- Whole grain pita chips and string cheese
- Mini light popcorn bags with low-sugar chocolate milk
- Whole grain bagel with low-fat cream cheese
- Small cup of homemade vegetable bean soup topped with an ounce of low-fat cheese
- High fiber crackers with hummus
- Whole grain cereal with fresh fruit and skim milk
- Low-fat yogurt with berries and 1 ounce of nuts

Goodbye Summer Fun → Hello Fall Routine!

It happens to a lot of people. Summer comes along and your healthy eating habits and exercise schedule get pushed aside. Road trips, visiting family out of town and trips to the amusement park are just a few of the summer time activities that can derail the healthy eating habits you have acquired over the year. These activities can cause us to consume large, often calorie-dense meals that lack many of our essential nutrients. When you eat out, it is tough to know exactly what you are consuming in your meal. Now that the school season is beginning and summer vacations are a fond memory, you may be wondering how to get yourself and your family back on a healthy eating and exercise schedule. Here are a few helpful guidelines to help you develop a healthy eating routine to last through the year.

Eat Breakfast

Breakfast is your opportunity to start the day off right. Breakfast refuels your body and gets you ready for the day, but a lot of people don't include breakfast in their morning routine. Skipping breakfast is a big mistake. If you have trouble "making time" to prepare breakfast

in the morning, plan your meal the night before and have the ingredients ready. Breakfast is beneficial for children and adults by improving overall health. Adults who eat a healthy breakfast are more likely to have increased productivity throughout the day, maintain a healthy weight, have lower cholesterol, and consume less calories overall throughout the day. If you skip breakfast, it may cause you to become ravenous by lunchtime and cause you to overeat. Breakfast is especially important for children. Children who eat a healthy breakfast are more likely to have better overall brain function, including, ability to concentrate, improved alertness and creativity, better problem-solving skills and the ability to perform better in physical activities. Healthy breakfast options should be formed from a combination of low-fat dairy, low-fat protein, whole grains, and fruits and vegetables. A few healthy breakfast ideas include an egg white omelet with vegetable, ham, and cheese and a slice of whole grain bread, oatmeal with dried fruit and nuts, and fruit and yogurt with a whole grain bagel.

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Stepping Into Fall

What a fun summer! I don't know about you, but many of us at PNT took some time off to spend quality time with family. Many of us travelled, and are now back to start the Fall season off strong. One of the drawbacks to the summer fun is being derailed from your healthy lifestyle. Fall is a great time to get back on track! Many people have school age children that start back to school, which forces us into a regular bedtime schedule and weekend routine. Take this time to get the entire family on track so everyone can be healthy together.

A very special thanks to Leslie Shaw, one of our summer PNT interns for assisting with the content of this newsletter. Leslie recently graduated from Texas A&M with a degree in chemistry and is interested in pursuing a master's program in dietetics. Leslie, thanks for spending time with us at PNT and good luck with your educational endeavors!



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Look for cereals with at least 3 grams of fiber, less than 180 calories per serving, and less than 10 grams of sugar per serving.

Pack a Lunch

Parents tend to pack lunches for their children, but not for their own lunch hour. Packing your lunch will show children that your health, as well as their own, is a priority. Ask your kids to help with meal preparation and explain to them the importance of healthy eating. Letting your child prepare his or her own lunch gives them the opportunity to make their own healthy choices. A child is more likely to eat the foods they choose rather than a lunch that is made for them. Setting this routine early on will build a strong foundation for your children and they will be more likely to lead health conscious lives. Children who are aware of the health benefits of healthy eating will grow into healthy teens and adults and their habits will yield a decreased chance for obesity and heart disease later in life. (See "Packing a Healthy Lunch" in this newsletter.)

Healthy Snacking

For both adults and children, an afternoon snack is a great way to maintain energy levels and decrease the desire to overeat at dinner. It is best to refuel our bodies more than three times a day, as the average American day is run fast and furious. Kids have smaller stomachs than adults so they need to eat more often to replenish their energy. Most people consider snack foods to be unhealthy junk foods, but there are many healthy snack options. Be sure to choose nutrient rich snacks that include fresh fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean protein and healthy fats. A good snack usually involves a combination of 2 of those types of foods. Snacks should be scheduled regularly and eaten during your personal hunger cycles. Always carry healthy snacks so you can avoid the unhealthy options when hunger strikes. (See "Fall Power Snacks" in this newsletter.)

Stay Active

Summer time means consistent physical activities for a lot of families. Whether it is trips to the beach, riding bikes, playing frisbee, or playing in the sprinkler, there is no shortage of outdoor fun during the summer months. Unfortunately, the end of summer often means a decrease in physical activity for the whole family. When the warm months end, people are less likely to keep moving. Back to school can mean late nights doing homework and working on projects, leaving less time for fun, but physical activity should never be pushed aside. Not only do children become less active when school starts, adults as well, get less physical activity. Adults should stay on track by planning their own physical activity at the same time as their children. For example, drop your child off at baseball practice and head to the gym for your own workout. Adults should prioritize their exercise to show children how valuable exercise is and the importance of staying on a schedule. Children who see the importance of exercise will turn into adults who prioritize exercise in their own lives.

Eating right provides the nutrients needed for energy, healthy bones, and good overall health. Ultimately, parents must be the good examples for their children to follow. Re-committing to healthy lifestyle patterns is a necessary action for people wanting to live a long, healthy life. As we like to say, life happens. It is not "if" we will get derailed from our good intentions - it's when. The key is to get back on track! Remember, it is possible to get back on a healthy eating schedule, even if you have had a not-so-healthy summer.

Packing a Healthy Lunch

Lunch doesn't have to be boring! A packed lunch doesn't have to consist of the everyday sandwich! A healthy lunch just needs to include a balanced variety of numerous food groups. Below are some helpful tips on keeping lunch exciting, along with a couple of innovative lunch ideas:

- Tuna salad wrap or sandwich on whole grain bread, with light mayo, lettuce, and tomatoes
- A Healthy PB&J: Peanut, almond, or cashew butter with 100% fruit spread on whole grain bread
- Egg or chicken salad wrap or sandwich on whole grain bread
- Any lean meat with lots of veggies on a whole grain bread
- Pack high fiber crackers and pretzels along with a variety of fruits and veggies as side options.
- Pack salad with the dressing in a separate container. Cheese sticks, nuts, and dried fruit are also healthy side options that stay fresh until lunch time.

Beyond the Sandwich

A thermos is always a good way to pack a cold drink, but it can also be used to pack a hot meal that will stay warm until lunch time. There are many meals you can store in a thermos but here are a few ideas:

- Soup-choose those with lots of vegetables, low sodium, and avoid those that are cream based
- Chili-serve with whole grain crackers for dipping
- Leftovers-could be chicken casserole, turkey pot pie, spaghetti, etc.
- Whatever you had the night before can be heated up, stored in a thermos, and remain warm until lunch time.

Food Safety

To keep lunches cold away from home, include a small frozen gel pack or frozen juice box. Of course, if there's a refrigerator available, store perishable items there upon arrival. Use an insulated container to keep food like soup, chili, and stew hot. Fill the container with boiling water, let stand for a few minutes, empty, and then put in the piping hot food. Keep the insulated container closed until lunchtime to keep the food hot - 140 °F or above. To read more on how to keeping bagged lunches safe, go to:

http://www.fsis.usda.gov/PDF/Keeping_Bagged_Lunches_Safe.pdf