



The Nurse's Corner

Healthy Eating Habits for the New Year!

It's a great time of year to re-energize nutrition and healthy habits for the whole family! Here are some tips to make healthy eating easier:

Fuel Your Morning with Breakfast: Studies show eating breakfast is associated with improved memory, better test grades, greater school attendance, and better behavior. Children and adults who skip breakfast may feel tired and have trouble concentrating.

Eggs, unsweetened yogurt, fruit, whole grain toast and cereal (containing less than 7g of sugar per serving) with low fat milk are great choices.

Prep Meals to Save Time: Taking a few extra minutes the night before or on the weekend to plan for lunches and snacks will save you time (and stress!) on school days. Try:

- Washing, chopping, and packing fruits and vegetables into school-size snack bags or containers so they're ready to go when you need them
- Getting kids involved in preparing and packing their lunch – kids who help plan and prepare their lunch are more likely to eat it
- Taking your children shopping and letting them choose some of their favorite foods, like whole grain breads, vegetables, fruits, and yogurts

Snack Smart: Have a nutritious snack ready for after school, such as:

- Apple slices with 1 tbsp peanut butter
- Small handful of nuts and 1 oz cheese
- Carrot sticks with 1 tbsp hummus
- 4 small whole wheat crackers with low fat cream cheese
- Air-popped popcorn



The Benefits of Breakfast

Breakfast is often called ‘the most important meal of the day’ and for good reason. As the name suggests, breakfast breaks the overnight fasting period. It replenishes your supply of glucose to boost your energy levels and alertness, while also providing other essential nutrients.

Breakfast Boosts Brain Power- Studies suggest that eating breakfast may help children do better in school by improving memory, alertness, concentration, problem solving ability, test scores, school attendance and mood. Eating breakfast also helps improve brain power, concentration and energy levels in adults as well. People who eat breakfast get more fiber, calcium, vitamins A and C, riboflavin, iron and zinc in their diet than breakfast skippers.

Breakfast is the “Weigh to Go” - The first meal of the day can help keep weight gain away. Research shows that people who skip breakfast are at greater risk for obesity and weight gain, while those who eat breakfast are less likely to be overweight.

Breakfast builds better bodies – Eating breakfast helps your heart, digestion, bones and more. Adults and children who skip breakfast tend to have higher cholesterol levels than breakfast eaters do. Those who eat breakfast tend to get less fat and more fiber in their diets. The insoluble fiber in breakfast cereals and fresh fruits may help keep you regular and reduce the risk of colon cancer. People who regularly eat breakfast consume more calcium which is important for healthy bones. Newer emerging research suggests that eating a nutritious breakfast of whole grain cereal and milk may help the body better regulate insulin levels. This helps decrease your risk of being overweight, having heart disease or diabetes.

Ideas for healthy breakfast foods – Hot cereals such as oatmeal or cream of wheat – when choosing a quick variety, go for the plain variety and add your own fruit afterwards as the flavored varieties tend to have a lot of added sugar. Cold cereals - choose whole grain and not cereals with a lot of added sugars. Fresh fruits and raw nuts, hard boiled eggs, yogurt & smoothies with fresh fruit are just a few ideas for more great breakfast ideas click the link below.

<https://greatist.com/health/healthy-fast-breakfast-recipes#smoothies>



How much Physical Activity do kids need?

The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, issued by the US Department of Health and Human Services, recommend that **children and adolescents ages 6 through 17 years do 60 minutes (1 hour) or more of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity daily.** Regular physical activity in children and adolescents promotes health and fitness. Compared to those who are inactive, physically active youth have higher levels of fitness, lower body fat, and stronger bones and muscles. Physical activity also has brain health benefits for school-aged children, including improved cognition and reduced symptoms of depression. Regular physical activity in childhood and adolescence can also be important for promoting lifelong health and well-being and preventing risk factors for various health conditions like heart disease, obesity, and type 2 diabetes.



What Kinds of Physical Activity should they be getting?

- **Aerobic:** Most of the 60 minutes or more per day should be either moderate- or vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity and should include vigorous-intensity physical activity on at least 3 days a week. (ie. Swimming, Running, Cycling, Hiking, Sports, Dancing)
- **Muscle-strengthening:** As part of their 60 minutes or more of daily physical activity, children and adolescents should include muscle-strengthening physical activity at least 3 days a week. (ie. Walking uphill, climbing, gymnastics, playing on playground, yard work, jumping, push-ups, for older kids; weightlifting)
- **Bone-strengthening:** As part of their 60 minutes or more of daily physical activity, children and adolescents should include bone-strengthening physical activity at least 3 days a week. (Jump rope, Sports, Dancing, Skiing, Bicycle, Running)

The Power of Play and Recreation Time



Playtime or recreational time is an important part of every child's life. Play can help children to be more creative and flexible thinkers. It can open-up their imaginations and may allow them to engage in pure, self-directed, free-flowing fun. When it comes to children's growth and development, play is essential!

It has been proven that play adds lasting mental, social, physical, and emotional benefits for both children and adults! Play can also help to create social connection and reduce stress. The benefits of play in early childhood are reason enough to incorporate daily healthy habits of play, but it is even more critical during these stressful times.

What are some ways we can make 2023 happier, healthier and more meaningful? In addition to helping our children make smarter food choices, incorporating exercise and nurturing their minds, let's add more playtime!

You may also be asking, "How can I fit playtime into our family's busy schedule?" The amazing thing about playtime is, the more you do it, the easier it gets and the happier your family will be! Most families have busy schedules and many responsibilities, but it is important to find those small pockets of time to play daily.

Sometimes playtime takes a little practice. If your family hasn't played in a while, you may have to schedule it until it becomes a habit. Scheduling family recreation into our calendars is essential, as it is for all other important areas of our lives. Follow your child's lead; they are naturally born to play.

Let play be a time for creativity and fun. You and your family could create a weekly family time to play together, whether hiking, going for a bike ride, baking, doing crafts, playing a board game, enjoying outdoor activities or other fun play.

One of the easiest ways to add more playtime to your family's life can be limiting screen time. Many adults and children spend way too much time in front of their screens, watching television, playing games or scrolling through social media or news.

You and your family may want to create a screen time plan. You may want to decide when devices should or shouldn't be used. For example, you may wish to limit screen time during dinnertime, before bed or while doing homework.

You may want to use the period of time before bed to relax together as a family. As a family you could enjoy reading stories together, doing puzzles or just talking about each other's day. Not only are you spending time connecting and decompressing, but it sets everyone up for a good night's sleep.

Here's to a healthier, happier 2023 year full of more play!

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