



University of California  
Cooperative Extension  
Tulare County

Agriculture and Natural Resources



Prepared by: Cathi Lamp

## BACK TO SCHOOL - NUTRITION & HEALTHY EATING

Start the new school year off right with proper nutrition! Healthy eating is important to children's functioning at school. Even moderate under nutrition can have lasting effects on a child's development, school performance, and relationships.

### Start the Day Off Right

Healthy eating begins with breakfast. Research shows that skipping breakfast can affect children's intellectual performance. So start their day off right! Offer choices from different food groups to give your child a well-balanced, healthy start to the day. Offer 100% fruit juice (canned, from a carton, or freshly squeezed), a banana, or unsweetened cereal with berries. Serve low fat milk, yogurt, or cheese. Make smoothies with fruit, juice or milk, and low fat yogurt. It's easy and fun to eat. What if your child doesn't like "breakfast foods"? Try a burrito, peanut butter sandwich, or fruit salad.

### Don't Forget the Calcium

One very important ingredient for a healthy diet is calcium, that helps children and teens build strong, healthy bones. By consuming enough calcium now, kids can lower their risk of developing osteoporosis and fragile bones later in life. Good sources of calcium include low fat or nonfat milk, yogurt, and cheese as well as certain vegetables, such as spinach, broccoli, and kale. Encourage your child or teen to drink milk instead of sodas and sports drinks.

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## **Help Your Children Eat Well**

Whether a student brings a lunch or buys it at school, it is important to make educated food choices. Parents, guardians, teachers, and school administrators can all help improve children's nutrition by playing an active role in discussing healthy choices and setting a good example. They can also create an environment that supports healthy choices by offering nutritious alternatives to fast food burgers and nachos.

## **Offer Healthy Snacks**

When your child comes home from school hungry for a snack, offer low fat yogurt, fresh fruit, and pretzels as healthy alternatives to soda, chips and candy. Not only are sugary foods less nutritious, they also can be dangerous to their teeth. Choose snacks that go beyond the ordinary. Serve cantaloupe, mangoes, nectarines, and pineapple. Let them snack smart with bagels, unbuttered popcorn, sunflower seeds, and almonds. Lean roast beef and turkey are good choices, as is low fat string cheese.

## **Build the Foundation for a Healthy Life**

Learning about the importance of proper nutrition at a young age will help to establish healthy lifelong eating habits and will improve the health of your child, both now and in adulthood. But nutrition alone will not ensure good health. Combining a balanced diet with physical activity will help your child to live a long and healthy life. Start the new school year off right by teaching your child about the importance of proper nutrition and physical activity for a healthier future.

**Source:** <http://www.nutrition.gov/covers/bts.html>

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