



PREMIER MEDICAL ASSOCIATES

Health & Safety Corner Nutritional Tips -- #1

We all feel that we can make changes in the way we eat. I never knew what good nutrition was until many of my bad habits were already in place! If we can teach our children how to eat healthier at a young age, though, those habits will be ingrained throughout their lives. Think of it as a wonderful gift to them rather than a painful process--and what a better time to start with that gift than during the holiday season! The key to success is to slowly incorporate small changes into the way your family eats. If you try to do it all at once, you will be met with more resistance. We will cover one or two changes that you can make towards good nutrition over the next several months. Success also depends on the entire family participating. Moms *and* dads need to be role models in promoting these changes, and will reap the benefits of a longer, healthier life themselves--another gift to your children. Don't forget to keep adding the physical activity to your daily routines as we covered previously; both aspects are crucial in preventing obesity.

Start your day right

When speaking to families in the office, I am amazed at the number of children who skip breakfast, even at a young age. I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to change this habit! Several studies have shown that a good breakfast can result in better academic performance in the classroom and higher standardized test scores in math, reading, and vocabulary. In addition to academic benefits, behavior is also improved. There are also well known health benefits showing that children who eat healthy breakfasts keep their weight under control and have lower cholesterol.

So how do you fit in breakfast into the morning shuffle, when your child is tired and refusing to eat, giving all of the excuses ("my stomach hurts", "I'm not hungry", "I'd rather sleep longer"). If the struggle lies in motivation and tiredness, then it's time to look at bedtimes and slowly adjust that. Also, try to awaken them about 5-10 minutes earlier, so they have a little more time to wake up. Breakfast doesn't have to be a big production either, for those of you who try to maximize their own sleep-in time, or need to be at work early. Find a whole grain cereal that is low in sugar, high in fiber, add the milk and cut up a banana. Throw in a glass of orange or apple juice, and you have a pretty decent breakfast! Look

below for a list of other breakfast suggestions. Another option is to have your child eat breakfast at school. The most important thing is to fuel your child's brain each morning to make sure that you are optimizing their academic success and health!

Quick and healthy breakfasts:

- * english muffin with peanut butter, glass of milk
- * instant oatmeal (look for lower sugar versions), canned peaches, milk
- * yogurt with frozen blueberries mixed in, wheat toast with peanut butter or jelly)
- * hardboiled egg, mozzarella stick and a banana
- * Market Day breakfast cookie, mandarin orange slices and a glass of milk (no--they didn't pay me to put that in there)

Next month we'll talk about all of those sweetened drinks and calcium. Have a joyous holiday season!

Dr. Jill

Patient Information

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