Suggested Newsletter Inserts for Elementary Schools

Healthy Eating - Nutrition

**Stay strong with good eating habits**

Help kids stay healthy and better able to fight off infections with these healthy eating tips:

* **Provide regular times to eat and snack** - Even though your daily routine has changed, set regular times to eat and stick to them! Allow only water to drink in between these times.
* **Let your kids decide how little or how much to eat** - Offer a variety of healthy options during planned meal and snack times and trust your kids to know how much their body needs to be satisfied.
* **Eliminate distractions during eating times** – Make meal and snack times free of electronics, screens and cell phones.
* **Plan healthy meals and snacks** - Write down enough meal and snack ideas for a week or two at a time. This will help shorten your time at the grocery store and make online shopping easier. It will also reduce multiple trips to the store.

**Blast Off with Breakfast!**

Eating breakfast is one of the best ways to get your family off to a positive start to their day. It also helps support learning potential for your child. Try some of these quick breakfast ideas:

* Whole wheat tortilla wrap with cheese and salsa
* Rice cakes, cheese sticks and canned peaches
* Smoothie shake made with fruit, yogurt and oats
* Cereal trail mix, banana and yogurt
* Whole wheat pita spread with peanut butter and wrapped around a banana.

Looking for more information to help keep you and your family healthy? Call Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-5720 to speak with a public health nurse or visit the health unit’s website at [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/).

**Pack a rainbow in your kid’s lunch**!

Send your child to school with a lunch full of colourful veggies and fruit! Try these kid friendly ideas:

* Add grated carrot to egg or tuna salad
* Pack veggies or fruit in small bite size pieces
* Make veggies and fruit fun using tools like melon ballers, vegetable crinkle cutters, cookie cutters or even an egg slicer
* Add a shake of cinnamon to cut fruit if it tends to turn brown, it will also add flavour to their favourite apple or banana pieces
* Send a small container of yogurt or pudding to dip fruit in, or send cottage cheese or hummus for veggies.

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**Packing a Healthy School Lunch**

A school lunch should give children the energy and nutrients they need to be ready to learn, be more alert and perform better at school. When planning lunches keep these tips in mind:

* Pack foods from Canada’s Food Guide, including plenty of vegetables and fruit, whole grains and protein foods.
* Rather than buying pre-made lunch kits, make your own healthy “lunch kit” with divided containers and small ‘bite-sized cheese cubes, left over chicken chunks, veggie sticks or fruit slices.
* Get your kids to eat more veggies…send cucumber coins, zucchini sticks and pepper strips with dip.
* Fill whole wheat or multi grain wrap/pits/tortilla shells with your child’s favourite foods such as hummus and grated carrot or sliced turkey with honey mustard.
* Send lots of water to drink.

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**Pack School Lunches with Safety in Mind**

Try these food safety tips to keep your child healthy at school:

* Pack their lunch in an insulated lunch bag or container
* Keep food cold with mini ice packs or frozen water bottles
* Keep food hot by using a thermos
* Don’t forget to wash their lunch bag and containers in hot soapy water each night.

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**Healthy Celebrations**

Classroom and school celebrations are great opportunities for children to practice the healthy eating messages they learn in the classroom. We’re hoping you’ll help us teach the importance of healthy eating, by choosing healthy foods to send **in the next time your child’s class is celebrating. Here are just a few ideas we’ve come up with:**

* Send a tray of watermelon slices, box of clementines or fruit kabobs
* Make homemade mini muffins with whole wheat flour and grated carrots or apple
* Send a tray of whole grain crackers, cubes of lower fat cheese and grapes
* Send a veggie platter, or get creative by arranging it in fun shapes for the holiday
* Prepare chocolate dipped strawberries for a sweet treat.

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**Meal Time**

Meal time is a great time for families to get together and enjoy each other’s company, but we know it can also be a busy and problematic time for some. It’s important to have realistic expectations about what your child is able to handle during mealtime, and how much they can eat. Try these suggestions to help avoid mealtime problems:

* Establish consistent mealtime routines
* Prepare your child ahead of time - explain the rules at the table as well as rewards and consequences for certain behaviours
* Have everything ready on the table before seating you child
* Praise your child for following the rules
* Stay calm and encourage the behavior you like.

For more information call Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-5720 and speak with a public health nurse about Triple P Positive Parenting Program or visit the new Triple P Ontario website at [www.triplepontario.ca](http://www.triplepontario.ca).

**Water is the #1 beverage**

Healthy brains need to stay hydrated in order to learn and concentrate. That’s why we recommend encouraging your child to drink water continuously throughout the day. Drinking fountains are not always accessible at school, so it’s a good idea to send water in a reusable bottle with your child every day. Sugar sweetened drinks like pop, juice, and fruit drinks might sound tasty but they don’t provide the same benefits when it comes to staying healthy and hydrated. Water is the best option!

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**Energy Drinks**

Energy drinks claim to ‘make you more alert or have more energy’. They contain up to 10 teaspoons of sugar and the same amount of caffeine as 3 cups of coffee, and should not be consumed by children, youth or people who are caffeine sensitive.

Parents: you play a key role in educating your children and limiting their use of energy drinks. Offer your child healthy drink options like water and milk most often. And remember, energy drinks should not take the place of foods or drinks that provide them with key nutrients needed for proper growth and development.

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**Are too many sugary drinks affecting your child’s health?**

What children drink each day has a major impact on their health. Drinking fewer sugary drinks is key for good nutrition, healthy teeth and a healthy weight in growing children.

Families play an important role in the choices children make. Decreasing the number of sugary drinks will help your child to be healthy. YOU can help your child make good drink choices.

Sip Smart!™ Ontario is an initiative designed to teach children in Grades 3 to 7 what they need to know to make healthy drink choices. The Sip Smart!™ Ontario resources are fun and interactive. Families can find them online at [www.brightbites.ca](http://www.brightbites.ca).

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**Nutrition and Self-regulation:**

Self-regulation: the ability to manage your own energy states, emotions, behaviours, and attention in ways that are socially acceptable and help achieve positive goals such as learning at school, having good relationships and being well.

Healthy eating may improve your child’s ability to self-regulate

Eat more:

* **Plant-based foods**: colourful vegetables, fruits, whole grains
* **Healthy proteins:** nuts, seeds, legumes, fish, seafood

Eat less:

* Sugar and sodium
* Highly processed, refined foods

Focus on:

* Water or milk to drink
* More than one type of food at every meal or snack
* Eating regularly
* Creating a calm, relaxing environment where you can enjoy your food and not feel rushed

Suggested Newsletter Inserts for Secondary Schools

Healthy Eating - Nutrition

**Are too many sugary drinks affecting your teen’s health?**

What youth drink each day has a major impact on their health. Drinking fewer sugary drinks is key for good nutrition, healthy teeth and a healthy weight in growing teens.

Families play an important role in the choices their children make. Decreasing the number of sugary drinks you purchase will help your teen to be healthy. YOU can help your teen make good drink choices.

Looking for more information to help keep you and your family healthy? Call Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-5720 to speak with a public health nurse or visit the health unit’s website at [www.simcoemuskokahealth.org](http://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/).