

School Wellness News

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Elementary Teachers
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Get Kids to Eat More Fruits and Vegetables in Your School Cafeteria

The research is clear that kids do not eat enough fruits and vegetables, especially the dark green, orange, purple and red ones that are so important for health. Fruits and vegetables help our kids to maintain a healthy weight, reduce illness, and promote eye and heart health. The more kids are exposed to fruits and vegetables, the more likely they are to eat them.

Here are some tips that may benefit your school lunch program:

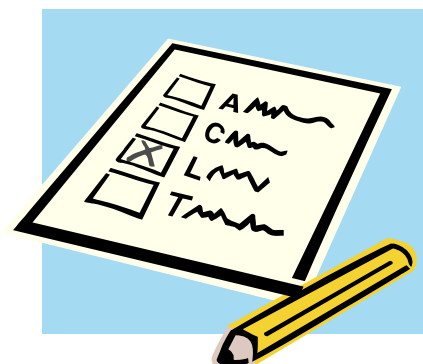
- ◆ Offer fruits and vegetables first on the service line. School cooks say this really works.
- ◆ Let kids choose their own fresh vegetables off the serving line. Be sure to offer a variety for their choosing.
- ◆ Vary your salad bar with different fruits and vegetables to keep it appealing and interesting.
- ◆ Offer a salad bar in the elementary school setting.
- ◆ Use leaf and romaine lettuce and spinach on your salad bar and decrease the iceberg variety.
- ◆ Add extra vegetables to entrees and sandwiches.
- ◆ Serve fruits and vegetables in different forms. For example, the quality difference between frozen peas and canned peas may be worth the extra cost.
- ◆ With rising food prices, canned fruits may be a good option.
- ◆ Serve refried beans with burritos and tacos or add them to the entrée.
- ◆ Serve fruit smoothies instead of ice cream.
- ◆ Promote fruits and vegetables in the cafeteria by hanging posters. Let kids know you think fruits and veggies are tasty and delicious.
- ◆ Offer taste testings with nutrition education in the cafeteria.

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National School Lunch Week: October 13-17, 2008

“Vote for School Lunch 2008—Presidential Edition” is School Nutrition Association’s (SNA) National School Lunch Week celebration. Students have a chance to vote for their favorite lunch entrees in the “Vote for School Lunch” contest. Candidates are Pete Pizza, Biff Burger, Gloria Grilled Cheese, Larry Lasagna and Petunia Pita Pocket. SNA has created celebratory Vote for School Lunch menus that bring the candidates to the cafeteria. Each menu has been prepared with the National School Lunch Program and school foodservice operations in mind. SNA also provides “Vote” merchandise, and school marketing materials.



Visit National School Lunch website for more information about the campaign and National School Lunch Week:
<http://docs.schoolnutrition.org/meetingsandevents/nslw2008/aboutvote2008.asp>.

“Love Your Veggies” Grant Opportunity

2008-09 Love Your Veggies grants are available. Elementary schools can apply for a chance to receive one of ten \$15,000 grants from the makers of Hidden Valley® Salad Dressings. Each grant award will support an elementary school in developing a program offering fresh vegetables and fruits lasting through the 2009-10 school year. Each school grant will consist of \$15,000 in direct funding and a one-time donation of Hidden Valley® Original Ranch® Light Dressing.

Funding must be spent on any of the following:

- ◆ Fresh produce (vegetables and fruits)
- ◆ A vegetable station (such as a dedicated salad bar)
- ◆ Kitchen equipment (primary usage must relate to proposed program)
- ◆ Program staffing (cafeteria personnel, lunchroom staff, etc.)
- ◆ Nutrition education supplies
- ◆ Training (such as food safety and nutrition education)

All proposals must be submitted via the grant program's Web site, www.LoveYourVeggiesGrants.org. Proposals must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. EST Nov. 7, 2008. Schools will be notified of their award status by March of 2009.

The Truth About Corn

Though sometimes dismissed as a nutrient-poor starch—both a second-rate vegetable and a second-rate grain—whole grain corn is lately being reassessed and viewed as a healthy food. Research shows corn has a very high level of antioxidants when compared to other grains, fruits and vegetables. Corn is high in the antioxidants—lutein and zeaxanthin. They protect your eyes from macular degeneration which is the leading cause of legal blindness among seniors. These carotenoid antioxidants also help keep your heart healthy, and help avoid strokes and some cancers.

Corn also has plenty of vitamins to help keep us healthy. Corn provides a good source of folate, Vitamin C, niacin and thiamin. The fiber in corn helps you feel full and aides in weight control. There are lots of good reasons to eat more corn!

Besides corn from the cob, eat whole grain corn products such as popcorn, corn tortillas, corn bread and polenta more often. Avoid labels that say “degerminated” when you’re looking for whole-grain corn.



Black Bean and Corn Salsa

Ingredients:

- 1 (15 oz.) can black beans (rinsed and drained)
- 1 cup frozen corn kernels (thawed)
- 1/2 cup chopped red bell pepper
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro
- 3 tablespoons lime juice
- 8 small green onions - chopped (use some of the stem also)
- 2 tablespoons vinegar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 small jalapeño pepper or 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper

Directions:

1. Mix all the ingredients well.
2. Refrigerate over night to blend flavors.
3. Refrigerate left overs.

Makes 5 cups.

Corn Jokes

Q: How much does it cost to buy corn from a pirate?

A: A buck an ear.

Q: What has ears, but cannot hear?

A: A field of corn.

Q: How is an ear of corn like an army?

A: It has lots of kernels.

Q: When is corn like a little quiz?

A: When it's popped.

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University of Minnesota Extension is an equal opportunity educator and employer.

University of Minnesota Extension connects research-based resources to communities. This newsletter provides information to help implement your local school wellness policy and teach kids and families about nutrition and active living.

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Eat an Apple a Day for Delicious Health Benefits

Minnesota apple season is here! Current research findings on the health benefits of apples give plenty of reasons to eat more apples this fall and all year round. Apples can play an important role in decreasing the risk of certain cancers, heart disease and reducing blood pressure in people with hypertension; thanks to high concentrations of antioxidants and fiber. Recent research also points to a connection between eating apples and improving memory function.

According to the USDA, apples are among the top 20 foods with the highest antioxidant concentration. Apples contain quercetin which is a powerful flavinoid antioxidant.

Apples are also an excellent source of fiber, which helps with weight management and preventing metabolic disease. They are especially high in soluble fiber which aids the regulation of cholesterol by preventing fatty buildup in the blood vessels, thus promoting heart health. Eat apples with the skin on to get the most antioxidant, fiber and nutrient benefit.

Enjoy the many varieties of Minnesota apples available this fall. Early variety apples tend to be best for baking and freezing. September apples, such as Honey Crisp, are wonderful for eating. Apples store best when refrigerated at

34 degrees. Those kept at room temperature will deteriorate ten times faster than refrigerated apples.

Consider canning or freezing fall apples for year round availability. For easy directions on freezing or canning apples, see an online University of Minnesota Extension fact sheet at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/horticulture/DG1111.html>. Also, learn about a newer product for canning pie filling in an Extension column on the subject at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/extensionnews/2008/canfruitpie.html>.

Eating an apple a day does keep the doctor away. Minnesota apple varieties that are good for eating include Honeycrisp, Cortland, McIntosh, Honeygold, Regent, Haralson and others. Visit an orchard and learn about the many great tasting apple varieties grown today.

