

# Back to School Fuel

*Keep it Simple & Delicious!*



## Tips for Healthy, Fun Lunches

- 1** Involve your child with the shopping and preparation of his or her lunch; your child will be more likely to eat the whole lunch.
- 2** Include the vegetables your child likes at home in packed lunches.
- 3** Go beyond sandwiches; try new food combinations to avoid monotony. (See Lunch Bag Menu Ideas.)
- 4** Make lunches colorful—kids eat with their eyes.
- 5** Include foods with different shapes and textures.
- 6** Cut sandwiches in appealing designs — an X, vertical halves, or cookie cutter shapes.
- 7** Avoid convenient, pre-packaged meals and food items; they tend to contain more fat, sodium, and sugar with limited nutritional value.

Dear Parent,

Helping your kids to eat better and move more isn't always easy. But teaching them about healthy eating and active living early in life will help them develop healthy behaviors that will last forever!

To help make healthy eating easier, these pages include fun breakfast and lunch suggestions, helpful hints for busy parents, and safe food preparation and packing tips. Most importantly, you'll also find a few interactive activities for the kids so they can learn more about making nutritious choices too.

We hope you'll find this booklet, and the Simple & Delicious Vegetable Recipes cookbook it accompanies, packed full of ideas for eating healthy. And remember: together, we can make the healthy choice, the easy choice!

*Brought to you by Barnstable County Mass in Motion  
and Cape Cod Cooperative Extension*



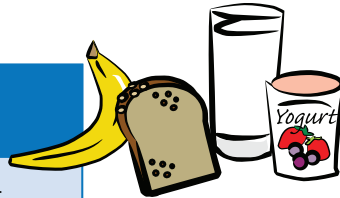
# Parents ... Get Straight A's With a Healthy Breakfast

Your Child's Attention, Attendance and Academic Achievement Improve With Breakfast

Healthy Eating  
Made Easier®

The proven benefits of breakfast for your child include:

- Better overall nutrition and healthy body weight
- Fewer absences and reduced tardiness
- Higher scores on achievement tests

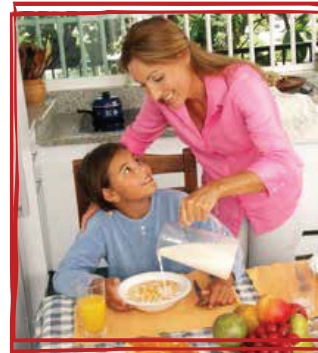


## Helpful hints for busy parents

- **Get off to a good start**  
Make sure your child has time for breakfast at home or take advantage of the School Breakfast Program if your school operates one. School meals are not only convenient but also an inexpensive and healthy option.
- **Keep breakfast simple**  
Have items available in your kitchen that can easily be put together in the morning: cereal, milk, toast or bagels, cheese, fruit and yogurt.
- **Join your child for breakfast**  
Be a positive role model—eat breakfast yourself and share breakfast with your child when you can.

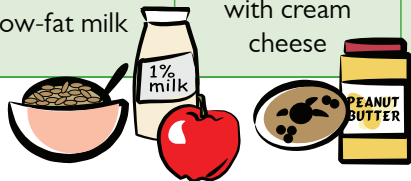
## Did You Know?

- Breakfast is the most important meal of the day.
- Any child who skips or does not have access to breakfast can suffer learning and health problems.
- Eating breakfast gets rid of hunger symptoms such as being tired or sleepy, getting headaches or becoming cranky.



## Quick and easy ideas for breakfast ...

Cereal and low-fat milk	Toasted bagel with cream cheese	Toast with peanut butter	Fruit smoothie (blend fruit with milk or yogurt)	Cereal bar with fruit and a yogurt	Hard-cooked egg and whole-grain toast
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## How much does your child need from each of the food groups every day?

Age	Milk	Vegetables	Fruits	Grains	Meats + Beans
2-8	2-2½ cups	1-2 cups	1-1½ cups	3-5 ounces	2-5 ounces
9-11	3 cups	2-3 cups	1½-2 cups	5-7 ounces	5-6 ounces

# MyPlate

## Lunch Bag Ideas



### MILK/BEVERAGE

Lunch Bag Ideas: Low fat or skim milk, 100% fruit juices, low sodium juices or smoothies, and water are all smart beverage choices. Non-milk beverages should only be offered after calcium intake recommendations have been met for the day. Because of the high sugar content, flavored milks such as chocolate and strawberry should be offered occasionally rather than daily.

Preparation/Packing Tips: Milk can be purchased at school for a very low cost. This is the best bet to be sure the milk is kept cold and the product is safe. If packed from home, use an insulated soft-sided bag if possible. Wrap a flexible ice pack around the milk container to keep it ice cold!

### FRUITS

Lunch Bag Ideas: Fresh, dried, or packaged fruits are all enjoyed by kids. Including fruits in season can help kids better understand where and how food is grown.

Preparation/Packing Tips: Wash under cool running water before packing. If the fruit is not a fragile item, rub well while washing. Smaller children may prefer cut fruit rather than whole (orange smiles are popular); be sure cut fruit is packaged and kept cool. Keeping food cold slows bacterial growth and keeps food safe.

### VEGETABLES

Lunch Bag Ideas: Variety is key! When in season, try to include veggies from your own garden or the nearest farmers' market. Outside the growing season, let your kids help select veggies at the grocery store to include in their lunches.

Preparation/Packing Tips: Use skinny baby carrots, make ants on a log (peanut butter-filled celery stick with raisins), use spinach leaves in a wrap, or pack a healthy dip such as hummus. Keep cut veggies cool. Harmful bacteria multiply rapidly in the "Danger Zone" — the temperatures between 40 and 140°F.

### GRAINS

Lunch Bag Ideas: Use whole grains rather than white sandwich bread. Making a wrap using tortillas or flatbread provides variety to the traditional sandwich. Mix it up!

Preparation/Packing Tips: Use clean packaging and bags. At lunchtime, discard all used food packaging and paper bags. Do not reuse packaging because it could contaminate other food and cause foodborne illness.

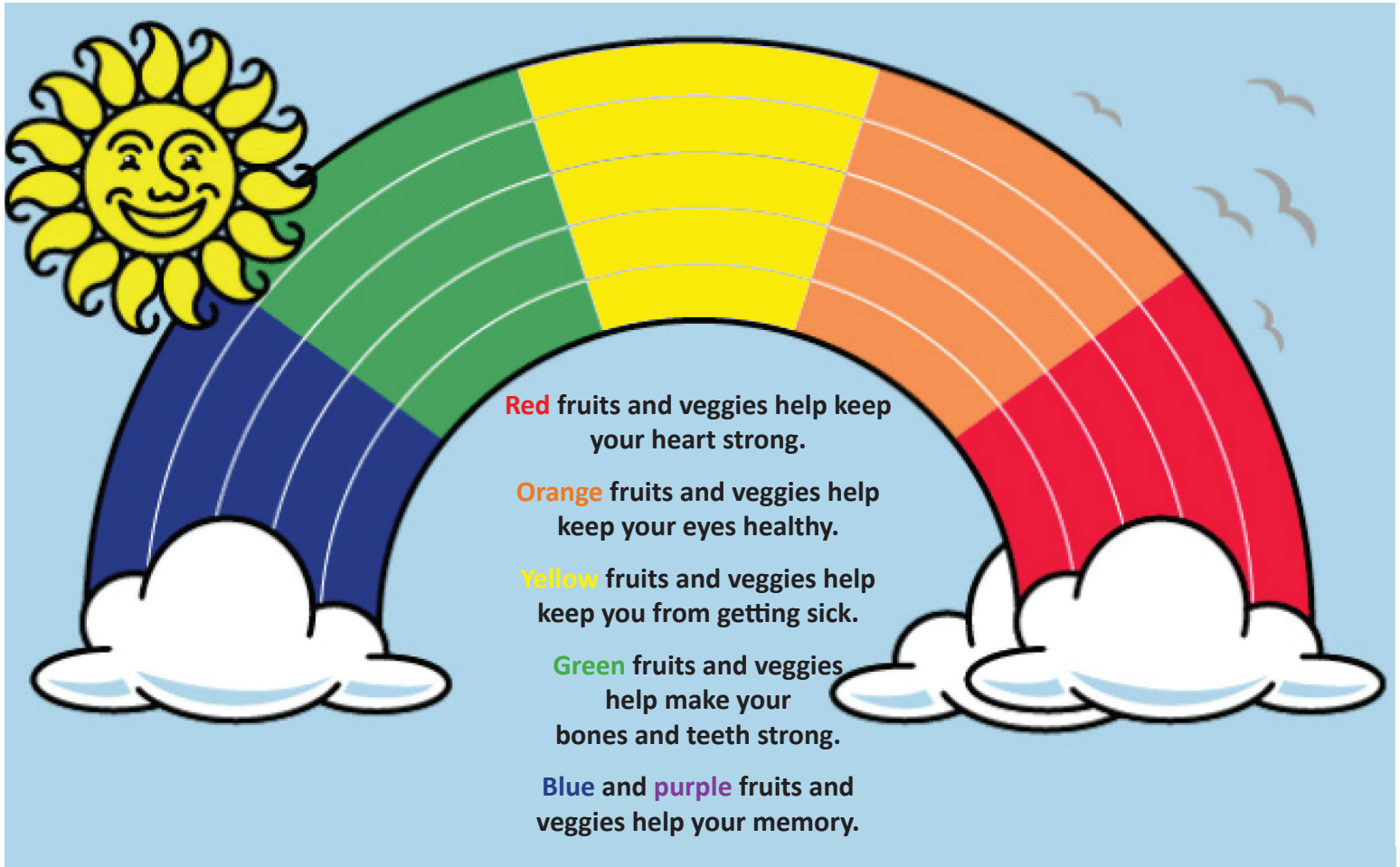
### PROTEIN

Lunch Bag Ideas: Lean protein sources can include meat, fish, eggs, as well as, nuts and peanut butter, cheese sticks with crackers, hard cooked eggs, and hummus.

Preparation/Packing Tips: Some protein foods (e.g., peanut butter) are shelf stable so temperature controls are not needed. But most meats, dairy, eggs, or prepared legumes do need to be kept cold. Make meat sandwiches the night before and place in the refrigerator or freezer. Keep perishable food refrigerated until time to leave home. Include a frozen gel pack or frozen juice box with perishable food in the insulated lunch bag or lunch box.



Flip through the *Simple + Delicious* cookbook to find a veggie in every color of the rainbow!



**Red** fruits and veggies help keep your heart strong.

**Orange** fruits and veggies help keep your eyes healthy.

**Yellow** fruits and veggies help keep you from getting sick.

**Green** fruits and veggies help make your bones and teeth strong.

**Blue and purple** fruits and veggies help your memory.

## Get Fresh! Word Search

See if you can find all 25 locally grown veggies highlighted in the *Simple + Delicious Vegetable Recipes* cookbook.

Don't forget to look horizontally and backwards too!

O	Q	U	Y	T	A	B	S	T	O	R	R	A	C	N	W	Z	E	S	Y
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C	O	G	K	K	W	F	P	P	M	U	I	U	U	S	H	C	T	K	Q
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