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Healthy Food Tips for Back-to-School Success

I have been asked by many parents what is a good healthy food for my child's school lunch? I have two children who are starting seventh and ninth grades this school year, so I decided to search the web for nutrition articles on healthy food tips for back to school.

As parents prepare to send their children back to school, they need to remember that nutrition plays a huge role in academics success. Mary Pat Alfaro, clinical manager in the Division of Nutrition Therapy at Cincinnati Children's Medical Center, says multiple studies have shown that poor nutrition adversely effects school performance and overall achievement.

Alfaro says that the best way parents can help their children nutritionally is by making sure they eat a healthy breakfast. She suggests that breakfast consists of a variety of foods, especially high-fiber and nutrient-rich whole grains, fruits and dairy products. This may include:

- **Fiber rich and whole-grain cereals with low fat milk**
- **Yogurt and berries**
- **Toast, eggs and 100 percent fruit juice**
- **Whole wheat bagels and cheese or eggs with low fat milk**

Parents need to make sure their children have a healthy lunch, too. Many studies have shown that children who eat healthy, balanced breakfasts and lunches aren't just more alert throughout the day; they also earn better grades than those who don't eat healthy.

Alfaro gives the following tips to parents on how to ensure healthy nutrition for their children:

- **Use myplate.gov.** Follow the guidelines by making half the lunch fruits and vegetables, and at least half the grains whole grain. Remember to go easy on fats and sweets.
- **Change is good.** Beat boredom with different foods. Instead of serving white bread every day, make sandwiches using pitas, bagels, English muffins, crackers or tortillas.
- **Make it easy.** Pack easy-to-to-eat fruit, such as grapes, apple wedges, strawberries or chunks of melon. Include a dipping sauce made of yogurt or peanut butter.
- **Watch what children drink.** Even 100 percent juice is loaded with sugar. Encourage children to drink low-fat white milk, or plain or sugar-free flavored water. Children should avoid drinks containing added supplements such as herbs and caffeine.

Source: www.sacbee.com/2011/08/04/v-print/3817470/healthy-food-tips-for-back-tohtm