Fun Food Ideas

Practical Tips

• Have a bowl of fruit on the kitchen table for a quick and easy snack.
• Always have freshly cut vegetable sticks in the refrigerator.
• Stock the freezer with frozen fruits and vegetables.
• Keep cans of fruit in the cabinet. Buy fruits that are packed "in its own juice" but still rinse the extra sugar off.
• Keep dried fruit at the house and in your bag for a quick high energy snack.
• Keep a pack of individual serving milk cartons or string cheese for bag lunches and trips.
• Make larger than needed meals and freeze the leftovers in small containers for a quick meal.

Quick Ideas to Help Improve Your Child’s Nutrition

• Add raisins, bananas and other fresh or dried fruits to hot or cold cereals.
• Add peaches or berries to yogurt (use fresh if in season or frozen if out of season).
• Top broiled or grilled meats with a homemade salsa made with tomatoes, mangoes, avocados, red onions, cilantro and lime juice.
• Add berries or bananas to pancakes in addition to, or as a replacement for syrup.
• Add frozen vegetables to stews, casseroles and stir-frys.
• Freeze fruits such as bananas or grapes for a frozen treat.
• Add broccoli florets, spinach, carrots or other vegetables to casseroles.
• Add cooked zucchini and sweet peppers to a jar of regular tomato sauce.
  • Slice Roma tomatoes and bake them in the oven for a sweet addition to pasta dishes or sandwiches. Freeze in freezer bags for a quick addition to meals.
  • Add corn to tacos or burritos.
  • Make regular or frozen fruit kabobs by alternating chunks of pineapple, melon, berries, and grapes on a skewer (watch your kids closely!)
  • Make the good ol’ “ants on a log” by spreading peanut butter in a slice of celery and topping with raisins. Try “fire ants or lady bugs on a log” by using dried cranberries.
• Interest your kids with a butterfly sandwich. Spread peanut butter on a slice of bread and a celery stick. Then place sliced bananas on the peanut butter. Cut the bread diagonally and then touch the middle points to each other to make wings. Put the celery stick between the two points of the triangle.
• Use cake gel to write your child’s name on a rice-cake or decorate a cracker.
• Offer cracker or pita wedges or tortilla bites with an assortment of dipping bowls such as guacamole, hummus, yogurt and peanut butter.
• Make Apple or pear boats by cutting the fruit in half and scooping out the seeds and pit. Take a thin piece of carrot or celery and “screw” into the apple to make the mast. Drape a piece of cheese over the mast for the sail. Now add raisins or any other small piece of fruit in the apple to be the sailors.
• Make smoothies by placing ½ -1 cup fresh or frozen fruit (a little frozen makes it colder), ¼ cup milk or yogurt, and half a banana to a blender.
• Add fruit to Jello.
• Make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich and cut it into shapes using cooking cutters.
• Sprinkle parmesan cheese or wheat germ onto air cooked popcorn.
• Help your child to make English muffin pizzas using tomato sauce, cheese and your choice of toppings.
• Make quesadillas by placing a small amount of oil or butter in a pan and then adding a 6 inch wheat tortilla. Add shredded cheese and fold in half. Cook until cheese is melted. Try adding tomatoes, beans, and/or corn. Eat plain or dip the bites in guacamole.
• Bake apples with cinnamon and a touch of sugar as a healthy and warm snack.
• Add some mandarin oranges and a splash of the juice to a bowl of cottage cheese. Also great with pineapple.
• Have your child help you make a fruit parfait. Fill a glass half way with yogurt and then add a layer of fruit (such as berries). Sprinkle a little cereal on top (such as grapenuts or granola or crumbled cheerios). Then add another layer of each ingredient.
• Make bananas on a stick by cutting the banana in half. Place a popsicle stick into the flat end of the cut banana. Spread on natural peanut butter (may need to warm in the microwave for a few seconds). Roll the banana with peanut butter in your choice of chopped nuts, granola, or rice cereal. Serve warm or wrap in wax paper and freeze for later as a frozen treat.

CHOKING HAZARD WARNING
Children under the age of 4 are at risk for choking on certain foods. You should not give a child under the age of 4 the following foods.
Chips, popcorn, pretzels, hot dogs, chunks of meat, large pieces of fruit, raw carrots or celery, nuts and seeds, raisins or whole grapes, whole cherries, peanut butter, marshmallows, hard or round candy.
To avoid potential choking situations with these foods, some can be altered. Cut hot dogs lengthwise and then cut into small bites. Cut grapes or cherries in small pieces. Cook vegetables such as carrots just a little to soften them up. Spread peanut butter very thin.