

Adventist Healthcare: Health Tip of the Week

Back to School Nutrition

Children who are nutritionally fit are more likely to have the energy, stamina and self-esteem that is crucial for doing well in school. Forty-eight percent of girls and thirty-two percent of boys do not eat breakfast every day.

- * Breakfast is the most important meal. Studies have shown that children who eat a healthy breakfast perform better in school and have higher attendance. They also have fewer hunger-induced stomachaches and are less likely to be overweight.
- * Kids need to stay away from caffeine. It acts as a stimulant and contributes to dehydration.
- * Children should consume no more than 30 percent of their daily calories from fat. Eat less fast food. Also, avoid junk food such as candy, cookies and chips.
- * The U.S. Department of Agriculture suggests a maximum of six tablespoons of sugar per day. The average teen consumes about twice as much sugar that is recommended.
- * Children get about one-third of their daily calories at lunch. Pack lunches and snacks with small portions of food, cut up and ready to eat.
- * Aim for five servings of fruit and vegetables a day. Pack raw vegetables, applesauce, fresh/dried fruit and 100 percent fruit juice.
- * Choose healthy options for lunch. Pack lean meats on whole grain bread, peanut butter on low-fat crackers and granola bars. Pretzels, low-fat cheese/milk/yogurt are also nutritious foods.
- * Schedule planned meals at regular intervals. This helps control blood sugar and binging.
- * Space snacks (2-3 per day). They should be at least one hour before a meal.
- * Don't overly restrict food or use it as a reward. Obesity in children has doubled over the past twenty years.
- * Encourage your children to eat slowly. This aids in digestion and helps control portions.

Sources: American Dietetic Association, KidsHealth, NIH, CDC, U.S. Dept. of Agriculture and Washington and Shady Grove Adventist Hospitals. The Health Tip of the Week is for educational purposes only. For additional information, consult your physician. Please feel free to copy and distribute this health resource.