

What's in your lunch box?

Hello and happy almost weekend! We hope that you are enjoying the near spring like weather some days and have taken the opportunity to get out there for some fresh air and sunshine!

This week's topic revolves around your midday nutrition and how the content of our kids' lunchbox either promotes or demotes health, success, focus and attention.

We all know that a well-balanced, nutritious breakfast is necessary to break-the-fast and get our body and brain the energy needed to have a strong, productive morning. In past wellness columns we have discussed the importance of a diet rich in healthy fats (avocado, coconut oil, olive oil etc) and greens; hence the morning smoothie! The same applies to our midday meal. Packing a good lunch box may at first seem like a lot of work but once it becomes routine, it's not that time consuming.

The midday meal should ideally be robust enough where you and your child are sustained for several hours afterwards. As with any meal prep, ask yourself the question; "Where's the fat, where are the greens, where's the protein?" Teach your child this as well so that they know what a well-balanced meal looks like. I recommend getting some small containers for chopped up fruit and veggies and a small thermos where you can pack some of last night's dinner (this is called a VITAL BEHAVIOR; in this case prepping enough food the day before to have leftovers for the next day's lunch; it takes foresight but saves time in the long run) If you don't manage this every day, I understand and a sandwich with something filling but healthy will do too. Be sure to get some fresh veggies and fruit in there; real food with life in it! Many times we resort to too much prepackaged food such as chips, fruit rollups, cookies etc. and although these often send our taste buds for a joy ride, they do not have the necessary nutrient content to sustain life and health and often they will spike your blood sugar to the point where you do not want to eat real food. The consequence will be a roller coaster blood sugar level, poor ability to concentrate, inability to focus and the need to fidget. Sounds familiar? Yes, some of the concentration issues with some students are directly linked to what is in their lunch box (and/or what they had for breakfast.) As always, there really is no mystery here, just cause and effect!

Here are some examples of good items for the lunch box;

Protein; beef, chicken , turkey, hardboiled eggs etc in various forms (from dinner the night before), good quality jerky or beans if you choose no animal protein

"Greens "; carrots, celery sticks, peas, sweet peppers, broccoli florets etc (maybe w a container of dressing for dipping)

Sliced apples, orange slices, berries, a banana (or other whole fruit to speed up the prep)

Fat; raw nuts are packed with good fats and will sustain you. (Careful here as there are allergy restrictions at school.) Otherwise, nuts are fantastic and nutritious in their RAW form! (Raw) nut butters (almond) is great to dip fruit in or eat with a spoon and bring great satiety. Pack half an avocado with the pit in place and in an air tight container for a great Omega 3 packed snack that will fill you up.

Get creative; don't try to be perfect but put some effort into it. It will sure pay off in countless ways!

Have a happy, healthy day, The Wellness Committee

