



Planning for a healthy and stress-free start to the school year

For busy parents, the idea of sending the kids back to school may be met with both celebration and stress. As the summer quickly comes to an end, it's time to think about planning fall activities and of course, the dreaded school lunches.

We know it isn't always easy to fit healthy food choices into busy days. But, with a little effort, healthy choices will become regular choices. Helping your kids eat well now will make them more likely to eat well as they get older.



One great strategy for encouraging kids to eat well is to involve them when making food choices at the grocery store. For example, start by asking them to pick out a vegetable or fruit. Talk to them about why they chose it and let them try it as a snack or suggest how to use it at mealtime. You can also use a shopping trip to show them how reading food labels is a good way to make healthy food choices.

Here are some helpful tips to make your back to school routine healthier:



Recruit your kids to help. Kids can clean out their lunch bag, wash veggies and fruit, help cut them up and pack them as healthy snacks.



Sandwiches can be cut into different shapes. Or, you can swap sliced bread for pita, tortilla wraps or bagels.



Use small containers. Pack some crackers plus cheese or pita wedges with salsa, and let your kids put snacks together themselves. Cut-up veggies and fruit also work as a quick pick-me-up at afternoon recess.

It's never too early to teach your kids about healthy lifestyle choices. Healthy habits now can help your children reduce their risk of cancer later in life.

(Source : www.cancer.ca)

Halloween tricks for treats

Chewy caramels and creamy chocolate bars are traditional Halloween treats, but many parents worry about their children eating too much candy – for good reason. Most Halloween treats are high in sugar, fat and calories. This ghostly holiday may be just one day, but candy is often present before, during and long after the holiday is over.

While an occasional sweet treat is not a problem in an otherwise healthy diet, too much candy – and other unhealthy snacks – may cause children to gain weight and harm their long-term health.

Here are suggestions:



Since children work best with structured plans, set limits in advance so that they have realistic expectations. Explain that they are allowed to have one or two pieces of candy after trick-or-treating, and a precise number each day after that for a specified time period.



Don't buy candy too far in advance or you'll have hard-to-resist treats that your children may indulge in.



Serve a quick, healthy supper before trick-or-treating since children with full tummies will have less room for treats later on.



To have less candy to contend with, cut trick-or-treat time in half and let your children hand out treats to other children for the second half.



Store candy out of children's sight so they won't be constantly tempted. They'll forget about it in a few days when all of the excitement dies down.

(Source: www.fmcoeur.ca)

October: Influenza Immunization Awareness Month

The best way to protect yourself from influenza (the flu) is to get a flu vaccine every year. Speak to your pharmacist or local health unit about getting the vaccine.

Here are some other ways to stay healthy and prevent the spread of the flu:

- Clean your hands frequently.
- Cough and sneeze into the bend of your arm, not into your hand.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with your hands.
- Clean and disinfect things and surfaces that a lot of people touch, like doorknobs and TV remotes.
- Keep your immune system strong: eat healthy foods and be physically active.

(Source: www.canadiensante.gc.ca)