

Lunch Box Nutrition

Food Wise by Ginny Erwin MS, RD, CPT
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School is back in session for many kids, and that means eating away from home five days a week. Teaching your school age kids (even college kids) back to school nutrition is more important today than ten years ago due to all the “new” and “better tasting” junk foods that have hit the marketplace. Many of the latest, greatest food items on supermarket shelves are marketed as being healthy and great tasting for kids. Well, I’m here to tell you that you need to start reading labels and teaching your children to read and understand food labels. This will go a long way to help keep your children healthier and happier.

As usual, breakfast is the most important meal of the day for growing children. They need to break that overnight fast, and properly start up their metabolism. Numerous studies show that kids who do eat a well balance breakfast have better test scores and fewer behavioral problems. Breakfast should be low in fat and sugar, and high in nutrients, complex carbohydrates, and protein, such as oatmeal topped with fruit, egg and turkey bacon sandwich made on multi-grain bread, or a fresh fruit and low fat yogurt smoothie.

Lunch time can become a nutrition struggle for many kids. This is why packing them a lunch box takes the guess work out of what they could order from the school cafeteria. Always start with a good sturdy lunch box. One that contains a thermos is best, because you can add soup or stew on cold days. Try freezing the juice boxes and bottled water because that will keep sandwiches and other perishables cold until lunch time. Remember to add foods that contain essential fatty acids (EFA’s) to the lunch box. EFA’s are essential to brain growth and development in children. Add foods such as ground flax seed, chia seeds, walnuts, pumpkin seeds, tuna fish, and salmon. Try stuffing a whole grain pita or wrap with protein rich foods such as nut butters and organic jam, or turkey and low fat American cheese. Add baked chips or a small green salad with mixed grains. Always give kids a choice of low fat milk or 100% juice. And no lunch is complete

without a treat, so add a small package of cookies like fig Newton's, a fruit roll-up, or fruit gummy snacks. Even a small square of chocolate can be a good-for-you treat. What's most important is that you are teaching your children how to eat a balanced meal and to understand what a portion size is for a treat.

Once the kids are out of the school for the day and off to extra activities, or back home, always have healthy, "clean" snacks available for them to munch on until dinner time. Air-popped popcorn, sunflower seeds with raisins, yogurt with fresh fruit on top, carrot sticks + celery sticks with a low fat cream cheese or flavored cream cheese are just a few of the easy, inexpensive snacks to have on hand to stave off hunger and keep them well feed and well nourished until dinner time.

For more nutrition and wellness tips visit www.ginetics.org.

See Ginny's "Super Salad" recipe and nutrition facts on next page »



Super Salad

Food Wise Recipe

by Ginny Erwin
7/28/2010

Super Salad

MAKES APPROXIMATELY 4 CUPS

Grocery List:

- 1 cup of cooked quinoa
- 1 can of garbanzo beans (drained)
- 1 cup of chopped grilled summer zucchini
- ~ 1/2 cup chopped raw spinach
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/4 cup chopped fresh mint leaves
- 1 Tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- Salt and fresh ground pepper to taste

Cooking Instructions:

1. Prepare quinoa according to manufacturer's instructions (try using low sodium chicken broth instead of water for more flavor).
2. Stir in garbanzo beans, grilled summer zucchini, and chopped spinach.
3. In a small bowl mix together, cumin, chopped mint, olive oil and salt and pepper.
4. Gently toss liquid mixture into quinoa and bean mixture.
5. Chill for at least one hour.
6. Serve chilled.

Super Salad

7/27/2010

INGREDIENTS: Garbanzo Beans, Spinach, Quinoa, Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Ground Cumin, Mint Leaves.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size (100g)
Servings Per Container

Amount Per Serving

Calories 100 **Calories from Fat** 25

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 2.5g **4%**

Saturated Fat 0g **0%**

Cholesterol 0mg **0%**

Sodium 20mg **1%**

Total Carbohydrate 14g **5%**

Dietary Fiber 3g **10%**

Sugars 0g

Protein 4g

Vitamin A 45% • Vitamin C 45%

Calcium 6% • Iron 6%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

Calories: 2,000 2,500

Total Fat Less than 65g 80g

Saturated Fat Less than 20g 25g

Cholesterol Less than 300mg 300mg

Sodium Less than 2,400mg 2,400mg

Total Carbohydrate 300g 375g

Dietary Fiber 25g 30g

Calories per gram:

Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4