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## Ten Healthy Eating Tips for Back-to-School

1. **Start the day with a good breakfast:** A balanced meal is important for keeping your kids focused in class. Think quality over quantity. Include whole grains, protein, fruit and a serving of dairy.
2. **Avoid sugary breakfast items:** Donuts, snack cakes, or high sugar cereals aren't a good idea. Not only do they add unnecessary sugar to your child's diet, but they also leave them hungry well before lunch. Choose foods higher in protein, fiber, and healthy fats for a more satisfying meal.
3. **Stock up:** on plastic containers, insulated lunch boxes, ice packs, sandwich bags and whatever else you will need to pack a healthy lunch for you kids. Don't wait until the first week a school of realize you don't have the supplies you need to transport a healthy meal.
4. **Let your kids make some of the decisions:** Give your child a few healthy choices so they are able to have some influence over their meals. Set them up for success in packing something healthy by having the right foods available.
5. **Healthy doesn't have to mean fancy,** elaborate, expensive, or time consuming. There are plenty of everyday staples that make great lunch options. Fresh fruit, string cheese, whole grain crackers, trail mix, and yogurt are all simple and convenient choices.
6. **Advocate for an afterschool snack:** School lunch is usually early in the day and kids are hungry by 3 or 4 pm. If your child goes straight to sports or other extra-curriculars be sure to send them with a snack or bring something in the car to eat on the way there.
7. **Save time by planning ahead:** Whether that means pre-cooking and freezing meals or just deciding what you are going to have; making a plan sets you up for success. Cook at home as often as possible and save time by making extra and reusing leftovers for future meals.
8. **Choose water:** or low fat milk for beverages at meals and snacks. If you know your child neglects to drink enough at school find out the rules on them bringing a water bottle and be extra vigilant in encouraging fluid intake before and after school hours.
9. **Avoid a food rut:** by challenging yourself to get adventurous. Try a new recipe or look for inspiration for healthy meal ideas online. Have your child pick out a new fruit or vegetable at the grocery store and challenge your family to try something new together.
10. **Pick your battles with picky eaters:** When dealing with picky eaters always have a variety of healthy choices available and model healthy eating habits yourself. When it comes to food you choose what and when to eat; your child chooses if and how much to eat.

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