



Balance Your Food

January 2013

New Plates in the Elementary School Cafeteria

Proudly supported by the ISB PTA and Epicure

From 21st January 2013, the Elementary School will have 3 new plate designs!! The plates, designed by Kylie Harter, were purchased from a PTA grant with further support provided by Epicure. Their support is greatly appreciated. There is also a new poster on the wall leading in to the ES cafeteria.

The plates and poster convey an important message being shared across the school about the importance of balancing the food we eat over the course of a day. The messages on the poster are:

- Balance your food: Have a variety of nutrients at every meal
- Make half your plate fruit and vegetables
- Make at least half your grains whole
- Protein: Variety is key (meats, eggs, fish, nuts, beans)
- Get your vitamins from fruit everyday
- Choose a rainbow of colors
- Healthy bones and teeth need calcium

The messages on the plates are reminding students to choose both fruits and vegetables at lunch. The aim is to try to make half of their meal fruit and vegetables and a total of 5 servings of fruit and vegetables per day.

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Links for ideas and information on balancing your food:

<http://www.choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/>

<http://www.nourishinterractive.com/>

Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.



The New Designs

Aim for 5 servings of fruits and vegetables every day!



For healthy physical, emotional and social development your body needs the right type of energy.



Choose a variety of colors of fruits and vegetables



Fueling the Brain

Brain cells need twice the energy than other cells in your body because they are always busy – even while we are sleeping!

Glucose is the only fuel normally used by brain cells. Because neurons cannot store glucose, they depend on the bloodstream to deliver a constant supply of this precious fuel.

Low blood glucose can lead to attention difficulties as well as a decline in auditory and visual processing abilities.

Blood glucose is generally obtained from carbohydrates: the starches and sugars you eat in the form of grains and legumes, fruits and vegetables. (The only animal foods containing a significant amount of carbohydrates are dairy products.)

Too much sugar or refined carbohydrates at one time, however, can actually deprive your brain of glucose – depleting its energy supply and compromising your brain's power to concentrate, remember, and learn.

Refined carbohydrates including soda drinks, cakes, cookies and candies release sugar too quickly in to the blood stream, which the body stores, and ultimately leads to low blood sugar levels. Many sugary, refined breakfast cereals also do this.

Complex carbohydrates from whole grains, legumes and some vegetables and fruits have long-chain molecules of sugar that are broken down slowly by the liver, like a slow release capsule. This keeps a nice steady supply of blood sugar just what your brain needs.

<http://www.fi.edu/learn/brain/carbs.html>



Start the day with breakfast

Eating breakfast restocks the energy stores that have been depleted overnight. If a child or teen's body is not refueled in the morning, it has to draw fuel from alternate energy stores until lunchtime. The stress hormones required to mobilize these energy reserves may leave the hungry child or teen feeling irritable, tired, and unable to learn or behave well.

The most nutritious breakfasts include:

- Carbohydrates (and fiber) from whole grains, fruits and vegetables
- Protein (dairy, meat, fish and poultry, eggs, beans, nuts, and seeds, soy products)
- Calcium (dairy, soy products, canned fish)

From Aimee Cassulo's Thani Talk Breakfast article

Nutrition for Teens

The teens are a time of rapid growth and development. Usually appetites match needs, but some teens are attracted to fad diets.

- Teenagers express their newly found independence by giving up some of the family food habits and developing their own styles.

- Education and information about the best choices of

snacks and takeaways are important at this time

- Remember it is the total diet that counts. Teenagers will eat some of the high-fat snacks and takeaways, but encourage them to balance these with healthy food.

- Emphasize good food as part of a healthy lifestyle, which includes regular

exercise, enough sleep, and time spent socializing with family and friends.

Have healthy snacks in the fridge, for example, cut up fruit or vegetables with a healthy dip such as hummus or yoghurt tzatziki, or vegetable soups ready to heat.



Consequences of Using Food as a Reward



Food is commonly used to reward children for good behavior. It's an easy, inexpensive and powerful tool to bring about immediate short-term behavior change. Yet, using food as reward has many negative consequences that go far beyond the short-term benefits of good behavior.

- **Contributes to poor health.** Foods commonly used as rewards (like candy and cookies) can contribute to health problems for children, i.e., poor learning, obesity, diabetes, hypertension and cavities. Food rewards provide unneeded calories and displace healthier food choices.
- **Encourages overconsumption of unhealthy foods.** Foods used as rewards are typically “empty calorie” foods — high in fat, sugar and salt with little nutritional value. Decreasing the availability of empty calorie foods is one strategy parents and schools can use to address the current childhood obesity epidemic.
- **Contributes to poor eating habits.** Rewarding with food can interfere with children learning to eat in response to hunger and satiety cues. This teaches kids to eat when they are not hungry as a reward to themselves, and may contribute to the development of disordered eating.
- **Increases preference for sweets.** Food preferences for both sweet and non-sweet food increase significantly when foods are presented as rewards. This can teach children to prefer unhealthy foods.

Tips to Promote Healthy Childhood Eating....



- **Have regular family meals.** Knowing dinner is served at approximately the same time every night and that the entire family will be sitting down together is comforting, which also enhances appetite, and provides a perfect opportunity for your children to share what's on their minds. If time permits, breakfast is another great time for a family meal, especially since kids who eat breakfast tend to do better in school.
- **Cook more meals at home.** Eating home cooked meals is healthier for the whole family and sets a great example for kids about the importance of food. Restaurant meals tend to have more fat, sugar and salt. Save dining out for special occasions.
- **Get kids involved.** Some children enjoy helping adults grocery shop and preparing dinner. It's also a chance for you to teach them about the nutritional values of different foods, and (for older children) how to read food labels. Aim to have your children leave home able to cook 10 healthy recipes!
- **Make a variety of healthy foods available and keep your pantry free of empty calorie snacks.** Keep plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grain snacks and healthful beverages (filtered water, milk, herbal tea, occasional fruit juice) around and easily accessible so kids become used to reaching for healthy snacks when they're hungry instead of empty calorie snacks like soda, chips, or cookies.