

## Making the Grade—Tips for Feeding School-Age Children

**G**ood nutrition during the school-age years is key to helping children grow, feel good and do their best. Besides nourishing their growing bodies, healthful eating supplies the energy children need each day for school, activities and fun. During grade school years, 6- to 12-year-olds begin learning to make food choices on their own. Parents and caregivers play a vital role in helping children develop healthful eating and active living habits to last a lifetime.

### Raising Healthy Eaters

Raising healthy eaters is like doing well in school. It takes hard work and commitment—by both parents and children. You can create an environment for your child that encourages healthful eating with these practical guidelines.

*Be a good role model.* Children learn habits for healthful eating and active living by watching others. Parents and other caregivers are a child's most influential teachers.

*Make a variety of nourishing and appropriate foods available.* Then let your child practice deciding what to eat and how much. When children listen to their own body cues, they learn to eat appropriate amounts of food to satisfy their hunger.

*Set a routine for eating.* Try to establish a time and place for eating, and eat meals as a family whenever possible. Keep the focus on meals and snacks rather than eating while watching television, playing video games or working on a computer.

*Respect your child's appetite and food preferences.* Your child's rate of growth will vary during these years, and so will his or her appetite. Food preferences may also change as your child develops new tastes, and there is no single "must eat" food. Don't engage in power struggles or use food as a reward or punishment.

*Involve your child in planning meals and snacks.* Children are more likely to eat foods that they help plan, choose or prepare. This is an opportunity for children to try new foods and develop cooking skills, too.

*Keep mealtimes relaxed.* This is an ideal time for family conversation and bonding.



**Cheesy Cinnamon  
French Toast**

### Breakfast Basics

Breakfast feeds a child's body and brain—helping to provide the energy and stamina a child needs to pay attention in class, get schoolwork done and participate in physical activities. Breakfast eaters are also more likely to meet their daily needs for important nutrients like calcium and iron.

Serve one of these quick and tasty food solutions to help your child get off to a great start each morning.

- ✓ *Jazzed-up toast.* Top toasted whole wheat bread, a bagel or English muffin with peanut butter or melted cheese and serve with milk and an orange.
- ✓ *Fruit and yogurt smoothie.* Blend together a carton of yogurt, fresh fruit, orange

juice and a few ice cubes to make it cool and slushy. Serve with graham crackers.

- ✓ *Last night's leftovers.* Re-heat veggie pizza or try a meatloaf sandwich topped with tomato slices. Serve with milk.
- ✓ *Waffle topper.* Top a warm toaster waffle with a scoop of low-fat cottage cheese and some fresh fruit.
- ✓ *Breakfast wrap.* Roll up scrambled eggs and peppers; refried beans and cheese; peanut butter and banana slices or any other favorite combination in a tortilla.
- ✓ *Yogurt parfait.* Layer yogurt, berries and ready-to-eat cereal in a dessert dish.
- ✓ *Grab and go foods.* No-time-for-breakfast choices can include items such as: a cereal bar, peanut butter sandwich, a few graham crackers, muffin, fruit, string cheese, yogurt, applesauce, juice pouch or small carton of milk.

### Smart Snacking

When planned for and chosen carefully, snacks can be a "nutrition opportunity" for your school-age child. Here are a few reasons to encourage smart snacking.

*Snacks keep kids fueled between meals.* For children involved in after-school play, sports activities or lessons, a nutritious snack

helps keep them alert and promotes endurance and optimal performance.

*Snacks can fill in nutrient gaps.* Snacks can contribute about one-fourth of the calories and nutrients your child needs each day, so it's smart to make them count.

*Snacks help prevent between meal hunger.* When appropriately spaced between meals, snacks help keep hunger at bay and may curtail overeating at the next meal.

### Smart snacking tips:

- » To help children choose nutritious snacks, offer foods from at least two food groups. See Nutritious Nibbles for ideas.
- » Go easy on treats. Fats and sweets can fit in healthful eating, but should not replace more nutritious foods from the five food groups.
- » Encourage kids to brush their teeth after eating or, if that's not possible, to rinse their mouths with water or chew sugarless gum.

### Nutritious Nibbles

- Peanut butter and whole-wheat crackers
- Fruit and cheese slices
- Whole-grain crackers with a dollop of salsa
- Cereal bar with milk
- Pita bread and hummus (chickpea dip)
- Dried fruit and peanuts
- Baby carrots with yogurt dip
- Tuna salad spread on celery sticks
- Air-popped popcorn and fruit juice
- Graham crackers and pudding made with milk

### A+ for Physical Activity

For good health, physical activity and healthful eating go hand-in-hand. The grade school years are a great time to help children develop positive physical activity habits. Children need at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Help your child find fun ways to move. Encourage active play, such as running, jumping rope, dancing and biking; family or

neighborhood games such as tag, kickball or badminton; as well as organized activities, such as soccer, swimming, softball and basketball.

---

*Check out this easy-to-prepare food idea.  
See how delicious healthful eating can taste!*

---

## Cheesy Cinnamon French Toast

**Prep:** 5 min.  
**Cook:** 6 min.  
**Makes:** 1 serving

- 2 slices cinnamon-raisin bread
- 1 KRAFT 2% Milk Singles
- 1/4 cup cholesterol-free egg product

**TOP** 1 bread slice with 2% Milk Singles and second bread slice.

**DIP** sandwich into egg product, turning over to evenly coat both sides.

**COOK** in skillet or griddle sprayed with cooking spray on medium heat (350°F) 2 to 3 minutes on each side or until sandwich is golden brown on both sides.

**Substitute:** Prepare as directed, using KRAFT 2% Milk Sharp Cheddar Singles.

**Serving Suggestion:** Serve with 1 cup sliced fresh strawberries and an 8-oz. glass of fat-free milk.

**Nutrition Bonus:** Enjoy two favorites, grilled cheese and french toast, combined in one delicious recipe. It is delicious any time of day and the 2% Milk Singles provides an excellent source of calcium.

**Nutrition Information Per Serving:** 250 calories, 7g total fat, 3g saturated fat, 10mg cholesterol, 600mg sodium, 29g carbohydrate, 2g dietary fiber, 5g sugars, 16g protein, 35%DV vitamin A, 0%DV vitamin C, 30%DV calcium, 15%DV iron.

**Exchange:** 2 Starch, 2 Meat (L)

Dietary Exchanges based on *Choose Your Foods: Exchange Lists for Diabetes* © 2008 by the American Diabetes Association and the American Dietetic Association.