

A HEALTHY START TO THE SCHOOL YEAR

August means school days are back. Here are some tips that can help kids (and kids at heart) get a healthy start to the school year.



Breakfast Fuels the Day... Research shows that eating breakfast is important for a healthy weight. Starting the day off with a healthy choice can also lead to other healthy choices during the day. And a healthy breakfast can be fast and easy!

- Try a whole-grain English muffin, bread, frozen waffle, tortilla, or half a bagel. Top it with peanut butter, low-sugar jam, fresh fruit, or a slice of cheese.
- Choose whole-grain, high fiber breakfast cereals. What if kids won't eat it? Add a little of their favorite cereal. Top with fresh fruit and low-fat milk for a fast, nutritious breakfast.
- Keep a bowl of whole fruit on your counter, so you can grab it on your way out the door.

Lunch with a Punch... Schools are making healthy changes to their menus, but we need to teach kids to make better choices too.



- Review the school lunch menu with kids – not all choices are healthy.
- Pay attention to hunger and portion size. Learn to use food as fuel.

How do you make a healthy grab-and-go lunch that kids (or adults) will eat? Mix and Match! Pick foods from different food groups for protein, calcium, whole grains, and fiber. Be sure to include fruits and/or vegetables, too.

Here are some good MIX AND MATCH options for a healthy lunch:

Low-fat Yogurt	Fruit (fresh or lite canned)	Whole Grain Cereal, Crackers, or Bread
Peanut Butter	Broth-based Soups	Lean meats or fish
Cheese	Salad or Veggies	Pasta w/veggies or tomato sauce

Snack Attack... There are many healthy, fun extras to include in lunches or as an after-school snack. Keep these tips in mind:

- **Maximize nutrition:** look for high fiber, whole grain, low-fat, and no trans fat.
- **Control calories:** use individual portions and read labels. Keep snacks under ~150 calories.
- **Watch added sugars:** limit sodas, candies, and snacks sweetened with sugar, corn syrup, fructose, or other caloric sweeteners.

Get Moving... Children need 60 minutes of physical activity every day including aerobic (moderate and vigorous intensity), muscle-strengthening, and bone-strengthening activities.

- Break up sitting time with physical activity. Encourage teachers and group leaders to incorporate physical activity in the classroom.
- Encourage active recess and after school activities. Make sure children have a variety of safe and fun opportunities to play.
- Try new sports and activities. Participate as a family, church group, or with friends.
- Learn more about the physical activity policies of your local schools. Mississippi laws require that all students in grades K-8 get 150 minutes of activity-based instruction each week.
- Limit screen time. Put time limits on tv, computer, and video game use.



August Activity: A Healthy Start to the School Year



Plan a healthy breakfast and lunch.

- Think about breakfast and lunch as you plan your grocery list. Look for fast, easy options that are healthy and that you can grab-and-go.
- If you eat out, decide what you will order BEFORE you get there.
- Limit portion size.
- Go for variety in nutrition: protein, fiber, calcium, low sugar and low fat. Include fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.

Be active.

- Balance your food with physical activity. For example, plan exercise time during your lunch break, or at least take a 5-10 minute walk before or after meals.
- Know the guidelines: 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity for adults; 60 minutes a day for kids.
- Stand up to inactivity! Break up sitting time with some movement.

Here are some ways you can help make back to school time a healthy time.

You can do these activities whether you have kids or just care about kids in your community.

Aim to complete at least 7 of these easy activities.

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1. Plan for healthy breakfast, lunch and snack options on your grocery list.	
2. Walk or exercise during lunch – even if it’s only 5 minutes.	
3. Keep a nutritious snack and a bottle of water handy (in your car, purse, or backpack) so you will have a healthy choice when hunger hits.	
4. Learn more about Mississippi’s school nutrition and physical activity policies by visiting www.healthyschoolsms.org	
5. Review the weekly school lunch menu. If you are a parent or teacher, discuss the choices with your kids. Advocate for healthy foods in our schools.	
6. Talk to a teacher about how they incorporate physical activity into the classroom.	
7. Ask your local school about their recess and PE opportunities.	
8. Promote healthy school fundraisers such as fun runs and non-food sale items.	
9. Volunteer to help with a school or community garden.	
10. Talk to kids about healthy choices... What did you eat for lunch? What games did you play? What is your favorite sport? What is your favorite fruit?	

Visit www.kidsgetalife.org for more healthy tips.

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