

Health Messages – Did you know?

- The School Day Just Got Healthier for you because school meals are better this year. They are better for you and will help you do your best in school, sports, and help you grow and stay strong. Power up with fruits, vegetables, low-fat milk, and whole grain breads.
- Give it a try! Fruits and veggies give you energy to help you be a champion when you run and play. Eat them at school and at home every day as a meal, snack or dessert.
- Since you spend so much of your day at school, it's up to you to make healthy food choices while you're there. Eat fruits and vegetables at meals and snacks. And get used to the taste of healthy eating.
- Make fat-free or low-fat milk your rocket fuel. You need milk to help build muscles and provide fuel for your fun.
- Fuel up with fruits and veggies: Soar through your day like a rocket ship!
- Eating fruits and veggies of every color in the rainbow can help give you the different vitamins and minerals you need to soar through your day.
- Go to the grocery store with your family. Make your own list of healthy foods – like fruits and low-fat yogurts – that keep you healthy and strong.
- Did you know that good nutrition and regular physical activity can help you look your best? Since you spend so much of your day in school, it's up to you to make healthy food choices while you're there. Make physical activity part of every day, too, so you can be your best.
- When a food item is a whole grain the first ingredient should be a whole grain ingredient. Words to look for include: whole wheat, whole grain, cracked wheat, crushed wheat, wheat berries, rolled oats, and brown rice. Make sure you read the labels when choosing a snack or meal!
- Check out our school's new menu additions that are whole grain. These include whole wheat pizza crust, whole wheat rolls and breadsticks. Did you know you can even get white whole grains? Color can be deceiving. Some darker brown breads made not be whole grain. Make sure half the grains you eat each day are whole!

- This year our school lunch vegetable line-up is changing! Look each week for dark green; orange/red; starchy; and vegetables considered “others” like green beans. The serving size has increased from last year as well to include $\frac{3}{4}$ - 1 cup of vegetables each day.
- Have you ever heard of legumes? Legumes are a type of vegetable group that includes beans, peas and lentils. An important characteristic of legumes is that they contain protein and therefore can replace meat in some of your meals.

Garbanzo beans (aka chickpeas) and lima beans are high in zinc. Chickpeas are often used to make hummus and are typically used as a dip for whole grain crackers or chips or fresh vegetables like pepper slices, carrots, or celery sticks.

- Our school uses products or ingredients that contain zero grams of *Trans* fat per serving. *Trans* fats are altered during processing so that the food they are in lasts longer or is more shelf stable. *Trans*-fat can increase the risk of heart disease. *Trans*-fat is found in all products that contain hydrogenated or partially-hydrogenated oils.
- Here are some common whole grains you can choose to add to your snacks and meals!
 - Popcorn (choose plain, air popped)
 - Brown rice, quinoa, barley, or oatmeal
 - Whole wheat cereal
 - Whole wheat bread
 - Whole wheat crackers
- What's better on a cold winter morning than a bowl of hot oatmeal? Whether you're eating instant oatmeal, crunchy oat cereal or an oat bran muffin, oats taste good and provide health benefits. And since oatmeal helps you feel full longer, it may also help control body weight.
- Many varieties of whole-grain and whole-wheat pastas are showing up on our school menu and on grocery store shelves. They taste great and offer more health benefits than traditional pastas. The fiber content of whole-grain pastas is almost three times higher.
- Get keen on Quinoa (pronounced keen-wah)! For a diet rich in whole grain and variety, try adding quinoa to your menu. Quinoa, is often referred to as the mother of all grains since it sustained the people of the Andes Mountains for more than 5,000 years.
- Yogurt is a high-calcium, high-protein dairy food. In fact, if you don't drink much milk, eating more yogurt can help you get the calcium you need. Choose low-fat or fat-free varieties and choose plain varieties and add fresh fruit.

- Dark green vegetables are packed with nutrients. Choose broccoli, spinach, romaine lettuce, kale and other dark leafy greens. Try some of these dark leafy greens fresh or cooked or even in a smoothie for a nutrition boost!
- Vegetables are naturally low in fat and calories and high in fiber. But it makes a difference how you prepare them! Season your vegetables with dried or fresh herbs or light vinaigrettes and avoid added butter, oil and salt.
- Dried fruit and 100% fruit juice are in the fruit group too, but it's important to choose more fresh or frozen varieties. If you drink fruit juice, first make sure it's only 100% fruit juice. For a one cup serving of fruit you could have half a cup of raisins or a whole cup of a fresh fruit. You get more when choosing fresh!
- Vitamin C is important for growth and repair of all body tissues, helps heal cuts and wounds, and keeps teeth and gums healthy. Did you know there is more vitamin C in red peppers than in an orange?
- Many packaged and processed foods have a long list of ingredients on their labels. It is always best to choose whole foods or those with a fewer number of ingredients and ones you can pronounce!
- Take a look at the packaging of your favorite snack. At the top, read what the "serving size" of the item is. Once you determine the serving size, measure out that amount and see what it looks like. Many times, it is surprising how few chips, pretzels, crackers or cookies are really in a serving.
- In one gram of protein and one gram of carbohydrate there are 4 calories. However, in one gram of fat, there are 9 calories. This means that if you eat foods higher in fat content, you'll be consuming more calories because they contain a higher number of calories for each gram.
- Soda is one beverage that has a lot of added sugar. One teaspoon of sugar is equal to 4 grams. On your soda label for a 20 oz drink, there are 65 grams of sugar, which is 16 teaspoons of sugar!
- Fruits contain natural sugars. In fact strawberries are the lowest sugar containing fruit. Dried fruit however is condensed and therefore a much higher source.
- Commonly believed to be a vegetable, avocados are actually fruit. However, this is not the only surprise surrounding avocados. They contain heart-healthy monounsaturated fat, as well as nutrients that reduce cholesterol levels, promote healthy vision and potentially protect against cancer.

- You can enjoy your meals while making small adjustments to the amounts of food on your plate. Healthy meals start with more vegetables and fruits and smaller portions of protein and grains. Include low-fat or fat-free dairy on your plate or drink milk with your meal.
- Did you know that what you drink is as important as what you eat? Don't forget your dairy! When you choose milk, choose low-fat or fat-free. Each type of milk contains the same key nutrients, such as calcium, vitamin D, and potassium but the number of calories are very different.
- Did you know that broccoli is a member of the cabbage family, which may help prevent certain types of cancer? Broccoli has as much calcium per ounce as milk.
- Did you know that in the United States, cantaloupe are commonly called muskmelon? Cantaloupe is a fruit which grows on vines and is high in vitamin A.
- Spinach is considered a "dark green" vegetable in school lunch. It is a vegetable which grows as plant leaves and is high in vitamin C. Spinach tastes good raw and can be used in salads or on sandwiches.
- Did you know that in the United States, sweet potatoes are commonly called yams? True yams are usually grown in Africa and Asia and can grow up to 6 feet long and 100 pounds! A sweet potato is considered an "orange/red" vegetable in school lunch and is high in vitamins A and C.
- Did you know that the average strawberry has 200 tiny seeds on the outside?
- Did you know that tomatoes are in the fruit family, but they are served and prepared as a vegetable? They are one of the most popular vegetables eaten by Americans.
- Did you know that the Iowa Healthy Kids Act law gives nutrition guidelines for all foods and beverages sold to students during the school day in vending machines, a la carte line, school stores and fundraising? The law makes it easier for students to choose healthier foods to buy at school. Look for "Healthy Kids Act Approved" stickers on your school vending machines and a la carte lines.
- Did you know our school must include students on its school wellness committee? If you are interested in health and wellness, talk to our principal about joining the wellness committee. By being on the committee you will have the opportunity to share your concerns and ideas about making your school a healthier environment!