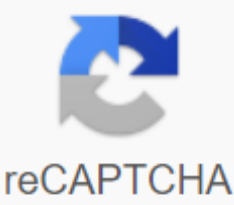




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You sit in class and your stomach starts to rumble. Finally, the bell rings and it's time for lunch - woo-hoo! After a time in class, you deserve the chance to head to the cafeteria and sit back, relax and enjoy your friends over lunch. But wait a minute - what exactly are you eating? More than any other food, children have a lot of control over what they eat for school lunch. A child can choose to eat green beans or throw them away. A child can also choose to eat an apple rather than an ice cream sandwich. When choosing what to eat for lunch, making healthy choices is essential. This is why: Eating a variety of healthy foods gives you the energy to do something, helps you grow as it should, and can even prevent you from being sick. Think of your school lunch as the fuel you put in your tank. If you choose the wrong type of fuel, you may run out of energy before the day ends. So what kind of fuel is right? What's a healthy lunch like? Unlike killer questions on your math tests, there are many appropriate answers to these questions. To Buy or Not to Buy Most children have the option to pack lunch or buy it at school. The good news is that a child can get a healthy lunch by doing one of the two. But it wasn't a slam-dunk. Chances are, some of the food and food served in the school cafeteria is healthier than others. That doesn't mean you don't have to buy your lunch, it just means you might want to give the cafeteria menu a closer look. Read the cafeteria menu the night before. Knowing what to eat lunch in advance will tell you if you want to eat it! Take home a copy of the menu or find out how to find it on the school's website. Packed lunches aren't automatically healthier than the one you buy at school. If you pack chocolate cake and potato chips, it's not a nutritious meal! But a packed lunch, if you do it right, does have a clear advantage. When you pack lunch, you can be sure it includes your favorite healthy foods - things you know you like. It's not a one-size-size-all lunch. It's lunch just for you. If your favorite sandwich is peanut butter and banana, just make it and pack it - then you can eat it for lunch. Or maybe you like olives. Go ahead and pack them up! If you want to pack your lunch, you will need help from your parents. Talk to them about what you like to eat in your lunch so they can save the company. Parents may offer to pack your lunch for you. It's nice of them, but you might want to watch how they do it and ask if you can start making your own lunch. It's a way to show that you're growing up. You sit in class and your stomach starts to rumble. Finally, the bell rings and it's time for lunch - woo-hoo! After a time in class, you deserve the chance to head to the cafeteria and sit back, relax, and enjoy your friends Lunch. But wait a minute - what exactly are you eating? 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If you want to pack your lunch, you will need help from your parents. Talk to them about what you like to eat in your lunch so they can keep the company. Parents may offer to pack your lunch for you. It's nice of them, but you might want to watch how they do it and ask if you can start making your own lunch. It's a way to show that you're growing up.10 Steps to a Great Lunch Whether you pack or buy your lunch, follow this guide: Choose fruits and vegetables. Fruits and vegetables like hitting the jackpot when it comes to nutrition. They make your plates more colorful and they are packed with vitamins and fiber. It's good to eat at least five servings of fruit and vegetables every day, so try to fit in one or two at lunchtime. A presentation is not much. One serving of carrots is 1/2 cup or about 6 baby carrots. The serving of fruit can be one medium orange. To know to know facts about fat. Children need fat in their diet to stay healthy - it also helps you feel full - but you don't want to eat too much. Fats are found in butter, oil, cheese, nuts, and meat. Some of the higher fat lunch meals include french fries, hot dogs, cheeseburgers, macaroni and cheese, and chicken nuggets. Don't worry if you like this food! There is no bad food, but you may want to eat it less often and in smaller portions. Lower-fat foods are usually baked or baked. Some of the best low-fat foods are fruits, vegetables, and skimmed and low-fat milk. Let whole grains rule. Grains include bread, cereals, rice and pasta. But when we learn more about good nutrition, it is clear that whole grains are better than refined grains. What's the difference? Brown rice is whole grain, but white rice is not. Likewise, whole grain bread contains whole grains, whereas regular white bread does not. It's not just about what you eat - drinks also count! Milk has been a favorite lunch drink for a long time. If you don't like milk, choose water. Avoid juice and soda drinks. Balance your lunch. When people talk about a balanced diet, they mean foods that include a mix of food groups: some grains, some fruits, some vegetables, some meat or protein foods, and some dairy foods like milk and cheese. Try to do this with your lunch. If you don't have a variety of foods on your plate, it may not be balanced. A double order of french fries, for example, won't make a balanced lunch. Stay away from packaged snacks. Many schools make salty snacks, sweets and sodas available in the cafeteria or at vending machines. It's okay to have these meals once in a while, but they shouldn't be on your lunch menu. Combine. Do you have the same lunch every day? If lunch is a hot dog, it's time to change your routine. Keep your taste buds from getting bored and try something new. Eating many different types of food gives your body a variety of nutrients. Get out of the clean plate club. Since lunch can be a busy time, you may not stop to think if you're already full. Try to listen to what your body says. If you feel full, it's okay to stop eating. Use your manners. The cafeteria sometimes looks like a meal at the zoo. Don't be an animal! Follow the simple rule your parents are always reminded of: Chew with your mouth closed. Don't talk and eat at the same time. Use You. Put your napkin on your lap. Be polite. And don't make fun of what other people eat. Don't drink milk and laugh at the same time! Whatever you do at lunchtime, don't tell your friends funny jokes when they drink milk. Before you know it, they'll laugh and the milk will come out of their noses! Dirty! Reviewed by: Mary L. Gavin, MD Date review: September 2015 At five lunches per week, substantially substantial children's diets come from the school cafeteria. Since 1980, obesity rates have doubled among children and tripled for adolescents [source: McKay]. This means that the calories they get from school meals are more important than ever. In an era of super-sized portions and empty calories, school lunches can go a long way to ensuring your child's nutritional needs are met and arranging them on the road to good health. Many schools have improved their menus, but some of the food available is still not the best for your child. Let's take a look at the 10 worst foods in the school cafeteria. Advertising Content Many parents may remember the days of mystery meat on the school lunch menu, which meant rging through Salisbury steaks with plastic sporadies. This main course is a staple in the 1970s cafeteria, and is usually covered in gravy and served with butter potatoes and french fries. It's no surprise that this unknown bread steak is no longer on many modern school lunch menus. But what's on the menu is the dicinerated meat. Irradiation is a process that treats food with luminous energy, such as X-rays and gamma rays. It kills germs like E., which can cause serious or even deadly diseases in children. In the US, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved irradiation as a way to make food safer to eat [source: FDA]. Critics, on the other hand, claim that the process makes food less nutritious, changes its taste and could have negative health effects down the road. A better plan, according to opponents of irradiation, is for schools to go with better sources of meat and use better cooking techniques, which are often more expensive. The resulting controversy makes the dicinerated food a ridiculous addition to the school lunch menu. School Ads has come a long way from the days when almost anything could be dropped into oil barrels, but deep frying is still a reality in many underfunded school districts. Deep fried chicken fingers and fries are high in calories and fat and low in nutritional value. Fried foods are also typically higher in sodium, and saturated fats, also known as trans-fats, are a big reason why obesity rates for children have doubled since 1980. Grilled or grilled meat is a better option, and many schools choose to serve oven-baked fries now. If your child's school still uses a deep frying pan, advise him or her to hit the salad bar instead. Ads While many schools have cleaned up their act in complying with stricter federal regulations on school lunch nutrition, vending machines remains a fixture in schools across the country. These machines selling sweets and chips make it all too easy for your child to eat these items as if, sometimes replacing their lunch. As more schools shift to healthier snack items, encourage your child to skip the empty one candy and choose more nutritious options. Vending machines filled with whole grain crackers, granola bars and fresh fruit stems are becoming more common, which will hopefully help children make better choices. President Jimmy Carter's ad set a standard nearly 30 years ago for nutrition requirements in school lunches. Unfortunately, the fat, calorie, and sodium content is not regulated. Currently, some schools offer donuts and cakes, and others have ice cream carts in the cafeteria. Desserts on the lunch line are full of sugar, empty calories, and fat. Encourage your kids to avoid overdosing on candy at school. Keep their desserts and sweet treats limited to dinner time where you can monitor the amount they consume. Pack fresh fruits to take your kids to school to help fight the sweet tooth. Ads you might like kids, but soda is responsible for more empty calories than anything they put in their bodies. Soda is loaded with sugar and high fructose corn syrup, plus it contains phosphorus, an ingredient that can drain calcium levels in bone growing. There are moves for machines to be removed or filled with diet soda only, but many schools still provide a supply of sugar-packed sodas and other packaged beverages, such as some fruit juices and sports drinks. It is best to regulate the amount of soda your children drink at home and encourage them to drink water, low-fat milk and fresh fruit juices at school. The Advert Was breathlessly heard 'circling the country when celebrity chef Jamie Oliver embarked on a recent health crusade against chocolate milk. It's confusing, no doubt: Shouldn't something with milk in the name be good for you? Yes, it should be. But it turns out that adding chocolate flavorings is a game changer. Beloved childhood drinks (and so on) have as much sugar in them as soda. We probably shouldn't take out chocolate here, because strawberry milk has a tooth-rotting effect and builds the same fat. Rather than flavored milk, which is excluded from the growing number of school cafeterias across the United States, direct your child to plain things in the form of low-fat or skimmed. They need calcium, not added sugars. Advertising Whether it's pepperoni, sausages or just regular cheese, pizza fails great when it comes to nutrition. Even throwing some vegetables on it, which is quite rare at school, doesn't help much. All pizzas are high in fat (especially saturated types) because they are loaded with cheese, but that's just part of the problem. Pizza doesn't contain much nutrients. There is a lot of fat, sodium and carbohydrates; and while some school boards consider the sauce as a vegetable, most health experts beg to differ. Ads Still, it's going to be worse. Pizza tossed with pepperoni leads your slice list Don't want your child to eat for lunch. Pepperoni adds more fat, and evidence has shown that eating lots of cured meats (and processed meats in general, in fact) can contribute to an increased risk of cancer. What's worse than bread, cheese and fake vegetable sepori? Plain bread and cheese, which defines the typical cheese quesadilla you find in the cafeteria. In addition to the high fat and sodium content you get from all that cheese, flour tortillas are notoriously high in calories and low in nutritional value. The typical can have more than 300 calories (equal to about three or four slices of bread), most of which come from fats and carbohydrates. Ad If your school offers whole grain quesadilla instead of a type of white flour, that's a plus - but a fairly small one when weighed against the downside of basing food on cheese. More junk food than actual food, nachos take the cheese's high-fat, high sodium content, process the cheese further to make it extra smooth and even less nutritious, and pour it over a pile of chips -- fried, fatty, empty calorie chips. Worse, schools that still serve this menu often do so with the addition of low quality processed beef. A nachos of beef and cheese contains more fat and saturated fat than is recommended for your child's entire diet, and can provide 50 percent more sodium than an impressively high sodium quesadilla. Food Advertising of all-American meat and potatoes, while filling and potentially nutritious, can be a nutritional disaster at the hands of underfunded school districts. When meat becomes meatloaf (read filler) and potatoes become piles of high-fat carbohydrates that are buttery and come from powder, this old canteen standby becomes one of the highest calorie foods on the menu. It also offers another health no-no, especially for children: cholesterol. With about 80 grams per serving, meatloaf foods supply up to a third of the maximum amount of cholesterol a child should consume in a full day. To avoid the potential health pitfalls of school lunches, you can always pack them yourself. But don't worry: Your baby doesn't have to skip meals if she leaves her brown bag on the kitchen table. While it may sound bleak, these 10 items are just a small sample of food served in cafeterias across the country. Many schools have taken healthier standards and offer many nutritional options that are lower in fat and higher; and even those who haven't pulled it together often have at least some healthier options available, such as fruit, granola bars and green salads. It's all about making good choices. School lunches will show you what your children eat during the school year. Look at the school lunch photos and get school. Source Brar, Deepi. How Many Calories Do You Drink? ahealthyme.com 2009. 2009. and food. Better Health Channels. 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