



Celebrating Birthdays, Not Sugar

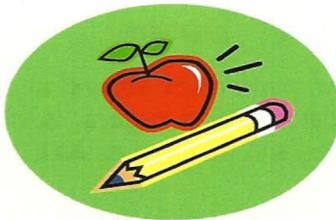
Healthy Isn't Ho-hum

Birthdays deserve celebration! And, as we learn more about the effects of nutrition, we can celebrate our children's lives with treats that honor both their birth and their ongoing health and well-being.

School communities in the Fond du Lac District are making a strong effort to cut the sugar and fat fed to our students. We want to help our youth eat more whole grains, vegetables, fruits and protein for the type of energy that helps them learn and grow.

A birthday marks a year of growth. Let's mark that milestone with special snacks and treats that keep fueling the health of our children and their classmates. Please consider that sugary treats can have a noticeable negative effect on children with dietary restrictions and limitations. The school board recognizes that parents make the final decisions regarding treats shared at school.

This resource can help support your efforts to supply healthy treats. Here are ideas for healthy food choices that make nutrition knowledge fun—and tasty!



Or, skip birthday food altogether! Visit the local "dollar store" for inexpensive, non-edible treasures like stickers, pencils, erasers and notebooks to celebrate your child's special day. Check with your child's teacher about coming into the classroom to share a hobby, music or story in honor of your Special Person.

Fruits and Veggies = #1

Birthday treats fall in the snack category—and most of the snacks served to children should be fruits and vegetables, to help kids reach the recommended five to 13 servings a day. Eating fruits and veggies lowers the risk of heart disease, cancer, and high blood pressure, and provides important nutrients like Vitamins A and C and fiber.

Planning and a growing number of shelf-stable fruit and vegetable products make this option doable. And fruits and veggies are less costly than many other less-healthy snacks: the U.S. Department of Agriculture reports the average cost of a serving of fruit or vegetable is 25 cents!

- Pineapple chunks, mango slices and kiwi slices are festively colorful, plus sweet and healthy. Use other favorites for a fruit salad mix or put chunks on straw skewers for kabobs—presentation matters!
- Dried fruits are intensely, naturally sweet.
- Try frozen grapes and berries for a popsicle-type treat.
- No-sugar-added applesauce and canned fruit in juice are stand-by favorites.
- Try a couple of new-to-you fruits or veggies and give the kids a taste-test.
- Whirl up smoothies: Low-fat yogurt, frozen bananas or other fruits, a bit of milk or juice, in the blender. Refreshing!
- Bring the birthday child's favorite fruit or vegetable, along with a healthy dip made of flavored low-fat yogurt, beans, hummus, or low-fat cheese.
- Many "fruit snacks" are just candy!

Brains Need Whole Grain

Carbohydrates sometimes get a bad rap. Bodies and brains need the energy carbs of whole grains. Whole wheat—or another whole grain—should be the first ingredient listed for breads, tortillas, crackers and cereals. The refined grains found in snacks like pretzels or some “fish” crackers shouldn’t be everyday offerings. Be sure to read nutrition labels to pick products that are low in sugar, saturated fat and trans fat (from partially hydrogenated oils).

- Whole grain crackers or rice cakes with a favorite protein makes a mini celebration meal.
- Combine a whole grain tortilla with nut butter or fruit spread, fruit slices and shredded coconut for a fruity burrito.
- Let the kids pick their toppings for party pizzas made on English muffins with sauce and part-skim mozzarella melted in a toaster oven.

Lean Protein Sets a Scene

Protein is a building block for our bodies. Meats, cheeses, eggs, seeds and nuts are great sources—as long as the meats don’t contain nitrites and nitrates, the cheeses aren’t high in saturated fats, and our children aren’t allergic to peanuts or tree nuts! (Check with teachers about food allergies—they can be life-threatening!)

- Make fast and easy slices and cubes of meat and cheese—or let the birthday child make fun shapes with cookie cutters. Or, go for more fun presentation with chunks of meat and cheese on skewers.
- Combine peanuts, soy nuts, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, almonds, and walnuts with dried fruits.
- Nut butters—peanut, soy, almond, cashew—make tasty spreads. Garbanzos and other beans make good dipping.
- Deviled or hard-boiled eggs are “eggs-actly” healthful!

Recipes & Resources

The FDL Public Library has some super food books, chock-full of simple, healthful recipes:

- *Healthy Snacks* by Susan Hodges
- *Healthy Snacks for Kids* by Penny Warner
- *Healthy Treats and Super Snacks for Kids* by Penny Warner
- *Snacktivities* by MaryAnn F. Kohl and Jean Potter
- *Teaching Snacks* by Gayle Bittinger

For baking, look for recipes made with honey, maple syrup, molasses or brown rice syrup instead of sugar. Use whole wheat pastry flour. And, in the future, watch for recipes shared by you and our teachers!

Shopping Help: Quick Pick Brands

A short guide to some healthy brands (lower in sugars & fats, higher in whole grains & fiber): Kashi crackers & cereals; Annie’s Cheddar Bunnies; Barbara’s, Cascadian Farm, Mother’s, & Nature’s Promise cereals; Cheerios, Total, Great Grains, MiniWheats, & Wheaties cereals; Hormel Natural Choice lunchmeats with no preservatives; Yves Tofu Wieners & Lightlife Tofu Pups; Applegate Farms nitrite- & preservative-free hot dogs; Natural Value Fruit Leather & Stretch Island Fruit Leather; Stoneyfield Farm, Dannon & Horizon low- & no-fat yogurt; Breyer’s & Dole no sugar added frozen fruit bars; Barbara’s Granola Bars; Borden & Sargento Light Mozzarella String Cheese; Laughing Cow Light Original Babybel; Mott’s Natural Style & Healthy Harvest applesauce.

Wash It Down

Water should be the main drink served at snack times. It’s free of calories and sugars, is low-cost, satisfies thirst—and our bodies NEED it!

Seltzer or sparkling water makes a nice treat, when it is sugar-free. Buy plain varieties and splash it up with a bit of fruit juice.

Fat-free and low-fat milks are the best choices for healthy hearts. Fortified soy and rice milks are also healthy options.

Choose only 100% fruit juice, and limit it to 8 ounces or less a day. Orange, grapefruit and pineapple have the most nutrients.