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August 2022

Back to School Success

The start of the school year is an exciting time for many! Research shows that eating a healthy diet and participating in physical activity can help learning skills, attitudes, concentration, and attention which is not only helpful for students in the classroom but adults too. Educators, students, staff, and caretakers are all part of the new school year, and it is important that we practice several healthy back to school habits for a healthy and active school year.

Eat Right!

It is recommended that we eat more fruit and vegetables, whole grains, lean protein, and low-fat dairy while limiting our intake of saturated fats, sodium, added sugars, and refined grains. The National Institutes of Health collected several nutrition and money saving tips that are easy to remember just like our **ABCs!**

Always use ads and store bonus cards, which may offer discounts on healthy foods like fruits and veggies.

Buy produce in season to cut costs. In Texas we are lucky that we can enjoy a variety of produce all year long!

Compare brands and package sizes to find the best buy. Check the unit price label for the best deal. Be sure to read the Nutrition Facts label and look for lower amounts of saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars.



Get Active!

Young people 6-17 years old should participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every **day** while adults should do at least 150-300 minutes of physical activity every **week**. Start by keeping track of your family's and your physical activity. Additionally, it is important to note the

amount of time you spend sitting and in front of a screen (computer, phone, TV, etc.).

Start small, family activity time can be as easy as prepping healthy meals together to a 15-minute walk after school or before dinner. What activities will you and your family do to stay on track during the school year?

*Written by Lindsey Breunig-Rodriguez, Project Specialist – Better Living for Texans
Adapted from: <https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/tools-resources/back-to-school.htm>
Photo Source: Microsoft Word*

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For many of us, the month of August is all about preparing to go back to school. Some will be excited to see friends and start new adventures. Some will be sad to see the summer end. Whatever category you're in, it's always a great time to think about healthy lunches! Some families will choose to pack their children's lunch, and some will opt for the school lunch. Both can be healthy and tasty!



Try to include foods from all 5 main good groups - dairy, fruit, grains, meats, and vegetables. "This will provide an energy balance throughout the school day. And providing lower-fat options with a colorful variety of fruits and vegetables will help keep your child's brain active during the afternoon," said Chelsea Stevens, AgriLife Extension Family and Community Health Agent, Williamson County. Get creative and fun with trying new fruits and vegetables. If you have young children, try cutting them into fun shapes. Remember, we want half our plate (or lunch) to be fruits and vegetables per the USDA MyPlate's Dietary

Guidelines. We also want to make half our grains to be whole grain. Try to choose low-fat or fat free dairy products and lean meat. With these healthy lunches, students will be ready to keep learning for the remainder of the school day! Remember, small changes matter. Make a few healthy choices now, then add some more in a few weeks or months. No matter how healthy the lunch is, it does the student no good if they refuse to eat it.

Some helpful suggestions to making lunches a bit easier:

- Get your kids involved. Ask them what they would like for lunch. Help them make healthier choices. Have them help make the lunch.
- Cut up fruit and vegetables the night before. Maybe even prepare a week's worth on Sunday.
- Sandwiches are a great option, but don't get tied down to them. Adding variety helps kids and adults make better healthy choices.



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- Heathy pre-packed items are great: unsweetened applesauce, cinnamon applesauce, low-fat yogurt, low-fat cheese sticks, and nuts.
- Using an insulated box or bag instead of a paper keeps foods cooler longer, minimizing the risk of bacteria growth. Plus, it helps the environment by not throwing away approximately 180 brown bags per year!
- Send water or low-fat milk instead of drinks with added sugar. Even juice can have a lot of natural and added sugar.
- Remember, after they get home from school, discard all the leftovers, half eaten foods, and used food packages.

Encouraging kids and adults to eat healthy is a daily challenge. Sometimes it is hard to figure out is this healthy or not. Too many times, a food has low sugar, but high saturated fats. Or low sodium, but lots of added sugar. Try looking at food a bit differently. In Learn Grow Eat and Go, our kids nutrition and gardening series, we discuss “Go”, “Slow” and “Whoa” foods. “Go” foods are those foods you should be eating most often. These include foods are lowest in fat, added sugars and calories. “Slow” foods are those that are higher in fat, added sugar, and calories. “Whoa” food are those that have very high fat and/or added sugar, and are much higher in calories. Below are some examples of these. This might help you encourage your family to make healthier choices.

- “Go”
 - Fruits – Whole fruits (fresh, frozen canned).
 - Vegetables – Dark green and orange vegetables.
 - Grains - Whole grain pasta, whole grain bread, and whole grain rice
 - Milk – Fat Free and Low-Fat Milk, yogurt, and cheese
 - Meats – Lean meats such as turkey, chicken, and fish, nuts, and beans
- “Slow”
 - Fruits – canned fruits in light syrup, fruit juices, dried fruit



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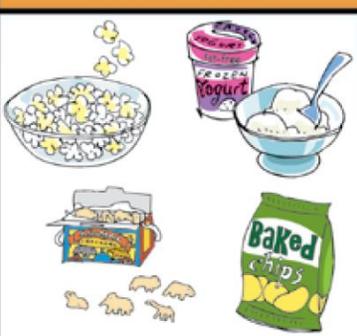
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- Vegetables – Vegetables that add fat (butter, oil, and sauces)
- Grains – White rice, refined pasta, and white bread
- Milk – 2% milk, cheese sauces
- Meats – peanut butter, eggs
- “Whoa”
 - Fruits – canned fruit in heavy syrup
 - Vegetables – Fried Vegetables, example: French Fries
 - Grains – Sugary cereal, doughnuts, pancakes with syrup
 - Milk – Whole milk, Full-fat cheese
 - Meats – Fried meat, hotdogs, bacon

Below is a great visual for sweets and snacks.

Sweets and Snacks

The foods below are snack-type foods. The “Slow” and “Whoa” foods are higher in fat, added sugar, and/or calories and need to be limited so you do not eat more calories than your body needs. Remember, if you eat sweets and snacks, eat small amounts.

GO	SLOW	WHOA
 <p style="font-size: x-small; margin-top: 10px;">For “Go” snacks, select foods from the “Go” column in the food groups section.</p>		



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To keep the creativity, below are some simple options for lunches.

- Celery with peanut butter
- Hummus with carrot sticks or another sliced vegetable,
- Hardboiled egg
- Mini pita pizza: low-fat shredded mozzarella, tomato sauce—all in separate containers—for assembling a lunchbox pizza
- Yogurt with fruit and a sprig of cinnamon with nuts
- Nuts – try to get the unsalted packages. Pistachios are a great fun option
- Banana peanut butter roll-up on a tortilla
- Trail Mix. Be aware of how much sugary items are in the mix.
- Caesar salad chicken wrap
- Shelled sunflower seeds
- Quesadillas
- Sliced cheese and lunch meat rolled into a tube
- Apple chicken salad on a stick: Use a toothpick and place some lettuce, chicken, apple, and raisins
- Cubed turkey and cheese kabobs
- Basil tomato skewers
- Yogurt with pretzel dippers

As my 6th and 8th grader get ready to start packing their lunches, we've been looking for some fun new recipes to use. My son's new recipe is the [Triple Berry Smoothie](#), unfortunately that's won't pack well for school. Good thing it can be a great snack when he gets home! My daughter's going to try the [Easy Chicken Pot Pie](#). My favorite new recipe is a tie between [Easy Egg Salad](#) and [Cucumber Salsa](#). I love the protein packed sandwich I get from the Easy Egg Salad, and I love the vitamin K I get from the Cucumber Salsa. With the added avocado, it allows my body to absorb Vitamin K which is



Figure 1 Picture from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

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important in bone health and blood clotting. Check out these recipes and let me know if you enjoy them as much as we do!

Sanci Hall is the Tarrant County Better Living for Texan's Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agent. Contact her at sanci.hall@ag.tamu.edu & visit our webpage: tarrant.agrilife.org and agrilife.org/urbantarrantnutrition/blt

Sign up [here](#) to receive the Better Living for Texan's - Tarrant County Monthly Newsletter.

Vegetable Highlight: Carrots!



Figure 2 Picture from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

Who doesn't love a good carrot? Carrots are a root vegetable meaning they grow underground. The most recognizable color is orange, but they are also found in red, purple, white, or yellow. Carrots are very healthy as they are packed full of beta carotene. Our bodies convert beta carotene into Vitamin A which is vital for good vision, good eye health, healthy skin, healthy mucus membranes, and for a strong immune system. A 1/2 cup serving of cooked carrots contains four times the recommended daily intake of Vitamin A in the form of protective beta carotene. Fun fact: Beta carotene comes from the Latin name for carrot. Carrots also are fat free, cholesterol free, low in sodium and low in calories. A medium carrot contains about 30 calories. This is a great snack to keep on hand.

Carrots are a great vegetable to plant in your garden. [Aggie Hort](#) has some great resources for planting carrots. Carrots do best

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in sandy loam soil that drains well. They can grow in the shade and do well in small gardens. For home planting, you should plant 5-10 feet of a row per person for fresh carrots. One foot of a row will yield about 1 pound of carrots. You can plant carrots in the fall or in the spring in Texas.

To harvest your carrot, you'll need to wait between 70-80 days. Once they are ready (the diameter will be 1 – 1 ½ inches), pull them from the soil. Its recommend to remove the tops to prevent the carrots from wilting. Wash the carrots and store in the bottom of your refrigerator.

Here are some fun facts I learned about carrots production. Texas ranks the 5th in carrot production using 94,000 acres and making an annual revenue that exceeds \$20 million.

Try this fun carrot recipe!

Ramen Noodle Skillet

Course: Main Dish

Servings 4

Ingredients

2 teaspoons vegetable or olive oil
1 cup onion, chopped (about 1 medium onion)
1 carrot, chopped or sliced into small pieces
2 cups frozen broccoli stir-fry vegetable mixture, thawed
1 cup water
1 3-oz package beef-flavored
instant ramen noodles, broken into pieces
2 cups cooked meat or poultry cut into bite-size pieces



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Instructions

1. Wash your hands and clean your cooking area.
2. Heat oil in a large skillet. Add onion and carrots and sauté until soft (about 5 minutes).
3. Thaw the broccoli mixture in the microwave and drain.
4. Add the broccoli and cooked meat to the skillet. Stir and heat (about 1-2 minutes).
5. Add the noodle seasonings to the water and stir into the pan.
6. Break apart the ramen noodles. Add to the skillet when the water simmers. Stir to moisten the noodles. Cover the skillet and cook until done (about 2 minutes).
7. Serve immediately

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 3/4 cups	
Servings Per Container 4	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 260	Calories from Fat 70
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 8g	12%
Saturated Fat 2.5g	13%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 55mg	18%
Sodium 490mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 21g	7%
Dietary Fiber 3g	12%
Sugars 3g	
Protein 24g	
Vitamin A 50%	Vitamin C 20%
Calcium 4%	Iron 10%



Figure 3 Picture from <https://efnep.tamu.edu/recipe/ramen-noodle-skillet/>

What vegetable do you want to learn about next? Email me and let me know.

Sanci Hall is the Tarrant County Better Living for Texan’s Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Agent. Contact her at sanci.hall@ag.tamu.edu & visit our webpage: tarrant.agrilife.org



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Local Events

Upcoming Events

- **Senior Nutrition Series – Be Well, Live Well.** Learn how to: Be Independent, Eat Well, Be Able, Read the Label, Be Safe, Eat Safe, Be Creative, Meal Plans, and Be Fit, Move More
 - Hurst Senior Activities Center, 700 Heritage Cir, Hurst, TX 76053, 11 am – 12 pm.
 - Tuesday, September 20, 2022 – Lesson 1
 - Tuesday, September 27, 2022 – Lesson 2
 - Tuesday, October 4, 2022 - Lesson 3
 - Tuesday, October 11, 2022 - Lesson 4
 - Tuesday, October 18, 2022 - Lesson 5
 - Register at hursttx.gov/hsac
 - Watauga Active Adult Center, 7901 Indian Springs Rd, Watauga, TX 76148, 11 am – 12 pm.
 - Wednesday, August 10, 2022 – Lesson 1
 - Wednesday, September 14, 2022 – Lesson 2
 - Wednesday, October 12, 2022 - Lesson 3
 - Wednesday, November 9, 2022 - Lesson 4
 - Wednesday, December 14, 2022 - Lesson 5
 - Register at <https://forms.gle/8WUGm8xCpszf3SnX8>
- **Adult Gardening Series - Growing and Nourishing Healthy Community Gardens.** Learn how to: Choose A Garden Location, Soil and Compost, Raised Bed and Container, Maintaining Your Garden, Diseases and Insects, and Harvesting Your Garden
 - North Richland Hills Recreation Center, 6000 Hawk Ave, North Richland Hills, TX 76180
 - 1 pm – 3 pm
 - Wednesday, December 7, 2022 - Lesson 1



Figure 4 Picture from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension



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- Wednesday, January 4, 2023 - Lesson 2
 - Wednesday, February 1, 2023 - Lesson 3
 - Wednesday, March 1, 2023 - Lesson 4
 - Wednesday, April 5, 2023 - Lesson 5
 - Wednesday, May 3, 2023 - Lesson 6
 - Register at: www.nrhcentre.com
- **Adult Nutrition Class – Get the Facts.** This 4-part series will help participants learn how to use the Nutrition Facts label to make healthy food choices when shopping. Special emphasis is given on sodium, fats, added sugars, and portion size.
 - Keller Senior Activities Center, 640 Johnson Rd Building C, Keller, TX 76248, Meeting Room #1
 - 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm
 - Monday, November 28
 - Monday, December 5
 - Monday, December 12
 - Monday, December 19
 - Register at: <https://secure.rec1.com/TX/keller-tx/catalog>
- **Adult Walking Group - Walk N Talk** - During this 8 week walking series, friends, family, and others from the community come together to support one another in a fun, simple way.
 - Keller Senior Activities at Bear Creek Park, 400 Bear Creek Park Road, Keller, TX 76248, 9:30 am – 10:30 am
 - Monday, October 3
 - Monday, October 10
 - Monday, October 17
 - Monday, October 24
 - Monday, October 31
 - Monday, November 7
 - Monday, November 21



Figure 6 Picture from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension



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- Monday, November 28
- Register at: <https://secure.rec1.com/TX/keller-tx/catalog>
- Non-Keller Seniors, please register <https://forms.gle/WPffQqjCCG9MU6Yd6>.
- Hurst Senior Citizens Activities Center, 700 Heritage Cir, Hurst, TX 76053, 12:30 pm – 1:30 pm
 - Monday, October 3
 - Monday, October 10
 - Monday, October 17
 - Monday, October 24
 - Monday, October 31
 - Monday, November 7
 - Monday, November 21
 - Monday, November 29 (11 am – 12 pm)
 - Please register with Hurst Senior Activities Center or at <https://forms.gle/FsJmcWK9avPfg97e7>
- **Gardening with the Tarrant County Master Gardeners** at Keller Public Library, 640 Johnson Road, Keller, Texas 76248 on Saturday, September 17th from 10:30 am – 12:45 pm.



Figure 7 Picture from Texas A&M AgriLife Extension



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Recipe of the Month

Recipe and photo source: <https://www.myplate.gov/myplate-kitchen/recipes>

Speedy Burritos

These potato and egg burritos are great for breakfast, lunch, or dinner. Enjoy with your favorite fruit.

Serves: 9

Ingredients:

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------|
| 1 chopped onion | 1 teaspoon black pepper |
| 1 red or green bell chopped pepper | ½ teaspoon salt |
| 4 cups finely chopped potatoes | 1 tablespoon vegetable oil |
| 3 pressed or finely chopped garlic cloves | ½ cup shredded cheddar cheese |
| 2 beaten eggs | 9 whole wheat tortillas |
| | hot sauce or salsa as needed |

Directions:

1. In a large skillet, heat oil on medium-high setting. Add onion, green pepper, potatoes, and garlic. Cook until potatoes are tender, about 10 minutes.
2. Reduce heat to medium setting, spread potato mix out to the sides of the skillet, leaving a space in the middle for the eggs. Add the eggs and scramble until cooked. Mix potatoes and all ingredients together once eggs are cooked.
3. Divide filling between tortillas and top with cheese and salsa.



Nutrients Per Serving: 184 calories, 5 g total fat, 1 g saturated fat, 41 mg cholesterol, 341 mg sodium, 29 g carbohydrates, 3 g fiber, 2 g total sugar, 0 g added sugar, and 6 g protein

Total Cost: \$\$\$\$



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