



# Fuel Their Minds

Ideas for Better Eating and Active Play with Children



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## Backpack Safety

As you prepare your child for school, back-to-school shopping is every parent's priority before that first day of class. Back-to-school shopping typically involves purchasing the primary necessities such as paper, pens, notebooks, and occasionally a backpack.

There are many different styles of backpacks to choose from, and choosing the right one for your child is not always easy. Knowing how to correctly choose a backpack for your child can prevent future neck, shoulder, and back pain. Strained muscles and joints are the primary cause of these pains.

As your child continues his/her schooling, you may have noticed over the course of the years that your child is carrying more books and binders than before. When your child's backpack is heavy and incorrectly placed on their shoulders, the force of the extra weight can cause them to lean backwards. Your child may try to correct this motion by bending forwards at the hip or arching their back. Overtime, this repetitive posture can set the stage for physical pain, leading to neck, shoulder, and/or back pain.

To ensure you select the appropriate backpack for your child, the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends the following four criteria:

- ✓ **Choose a lightweight backpack.** Try not to add to your child's school load.
- ✓ **Choose a backpack with two wide padded shoulder straps.** Straps that are narrow may press into the shoulder. Remind your child to use both straps! Many children use only one strap over their shoulder. This may cause your child to lean towards one side to offset the weight carried in their backpack which could potentially lead to pain.
- ✓ **Choose a backpack with padded back.** This will provide extra comfort and protect your child from any sharp edged objects they may be carrying (i.e. pencils, pens, textbooks).
- ✓ **Choose a backpack that has a waist belt & multiple compartments.** This will help balance the weight more evenly across the body.

As you consider the criteria above, be sure to have your child present when shopping for this back-to-school item. Ask your child to try on each backpack they consider to ensure the straps can be tightened to fit close to his/her body with the base of the backpack sitting 2 inches above their waist.

Lastly, the American Academy of Pediatrics suggests limiting the weight of your child's backpack to **no more** than 10-15% of their body weight. For an 80 lb. child, their backpack should weigh no more than 8-12 lbs. If the weight of your child's backpack exceeds the recommendations, ask him/her to carry some of their books and binders in their hands.

A comfortable backpack will make walking to school more enjoyable. If your child is not used to walking to/from school, try it out with them first, and then build up the number of days they walk. A boost in blood flow in the morning will prepare them to focus in class.



Article adapted from AgriLife Extensions, Texas A&M

## Frozen Fruit Kabobs with Yogurt Dip

Summertime cookouts bring loved-ones together to appreciate a good meal, warm sunny weather, and each other. This summer recipe is a perfect alternative to popsicles and a fantastic family cooking project.



### Ingredients:

32 pieces of fresh cut fruit and berries of choice

16 (12 inches long) wooden skewers

### For Dip:

1 cup strawberries, rinsed, and stems removed

1/4 cup fat-free plain yogurt

1/8 tsp vanilla extract

1 tbsp honey

1/2 cup granola (optional)

### Directions:

1. Prepare fruit by washing, peeling and cutting them into 1 inch cubes.
2. Take the wooden sticks and your choice of fruit. Slide the fruit onto the stick and put on a cookie sheet lined with wax paper and place in the freezer for a few hours until frozen.
3. To prepare the dip, puree strawberries in a blender or food processor. Add yogurt, vanilla, and honey, and mix well. Place in a serving bowl and top with granola if you choose.

*Recipe adapted from Health Magazine*

## Simple Kites

For those windy days in your neighborhood, flying a kite is a great experience for family interaction. Not only will your kids have fun making and flying the kite, it helps your kids get outdoors and stay active.

### Materials Needed:

- 13 gallon plastic trash bag (white bags are best for decorating)
- Two wooden dowels or straight sticks, one 24 inches long and the other 20 inches long
- Scissors
- Ruler
- String
- Clear Packing tape
- Ribbon and permanent markers for decoration
- Toilet paper tube

### Directions:

1. Cut open trash bag at seams to form a flat plastic sheet. Wrap ends of dowels or sticks with tape to help prevent bag from tearing when kite is flying.
2. Measure six inches down on the long stick and make a mark. Lay the short stick at the mark and form a "t" or cross shape. Tie the sticks together where they meet using string or tape.
3. Place the sticks on the trash bag. Using a permanent marker, draw a line around the frame creating a diamond. Cut your bag two inches (5cm) wider than your diamond pattern.
4. With sticks on the plastic diamond shape, fold plastic over each stick end and tape down. Fold over the extra two inches of plastic between frame points and secure each side with one long strip of tape. Turn the kite over and decorate it using markers.
5. Tape the ribbon to the bottom of the kite to create a tail for your kite.
6. Cut a piece of string long enough to fly your kite. Tie one end of the string to the dowels where they cross in the middle. Knot securely several times. Wrap the rest of the string around a toilet paper tube. You will need around 20 feet of string. Your kite is now ready to fly!



*Activity adapted from National Geographic Kids*

# Picnic Planning

One way to enjoy the nice sunny weather with family and friends is to have a summertime picnic! Most families enjoy the outdoors and having fun. Planning a picnic - whether extravagant or simple - can be stressful, but having a plan will decrease the stress and help in creating a successful picnic. To help reduce unexpected surprises, here are a few different things to consider when planning a picnic.



## The Food for the Picnic

The first thing that you have to consider is the food that you are going to bring. Try to keep food simple. Finger foods are usually a good choice as well as un- or lightly-dressed salads, kebobs, sandwiches, and cold pasta. You don't want to bring foods that can easily spoil. You also want to steer clear of food that will need to be reheated. Make sure that you have items that the whole family can enjoy such as cheese and crackers, grapes, berries, nuts, and seeds.

## The Supplies

The most important thing is the picnic cooler! These are used for carrying food, plates, utensils, cups, napkins, hand sanitizer, and garbage bags, and keep your food from making you sick. Be sure to put in a lot of ice! Make sure that the cooler that you choose is large enough to carry all of the food that you need to bring. Bringing a blanket to a park or the beach is not essential, but sometimes tables are dirty or your family would prefer a blanket to sit on. Make sure to create a checklist of all the supplies you need, so you don't forget any key supplies.

## The Location and Date

Where are you going to hold the picnic? The park and the river are always popular choices. Find somewhere that makes your family happy and a place that they enjoy. While weekends can often be crowded at outdoor public spaces, they are typically the best times to hold family picnics. It's a good idea to start family picnics late morning or early afternoon to avoid the hottest part of the day.

## The Activities for the Family

Depending on the location that you choose, the activities that you are able to do with the family will be different. You could go swimming at the river, or you might be able to go hiking and walking around the park. Some fun activities for the children are playing catch, kite flying, animal watching, nature hunts, and having races. Try to get the kids to enjoy the outdoors without needing to rely on technological devices. For the adults, picnic games can include leisure activities like charades, disc golf, and capture the flag. The most important thing for family activities is to have fun and be active.

## Give Everyone a Job

Everyone in the family should have a job to do. Some family members can prepare the food, while others can carry the picnic baskets or take care of the cleanup. Having everyone participate in some aspects for preparing the picnic will make things more enjoyable!

# Activity Kits Free From the University of California

The University of California has prepared activity kits to help you teach nutrition and physical activity concepts to your children, while integrating math, language and science. **These lessons come “ready-made”** with all of the materials you need to teach a fun and interactive lesson with your students. The curriculum was developed by the University of California or Scholastic, Inc.

**We will bring the materials to your site, free of charge,** and we can even provide your staff with trainings and additional resources to increase their confidence in these topics. We can also plan classroom, food-themed parties, special events, and other fun sessions.

If you are interested in signing up to receive these materials, please contact us.

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Fuel Their Mind Nutrition Newsletter Enclosed

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## Food Safety



Having a family picnic or barbecuing at a local park, beach, or even in the backyard are great ways to spend family time together during the warm summer months. Keeping food safe is a good idea so everyone can enjoy quality time together and stay safe. There are a few things to remember when the weather gets warm. Food can spoil quickly so it's wise to follow 4 simple rules: clean, separate, chill, and cook.

**Clean:** before preparing food and after handling food, wash hands thoroughly with warm water and soap. Teach children to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice or wash for at least 20 seconds. Make sure to clean under fingernails and jewelry too. Wash all kitchen utensils, food and drink containers, and coolers with warm water and soap. If preparing food at a location away from home, make sure to pack a sponge, soap, paper towels, and bottled water so cutting boards and surfaces can be cleaned.

**Separate:** avoid cross contamination by keeping foods separated. Keep raw meats and seafood in sealed containers or in zip top plastic bags so their juices do not come in contact with other foods. Never put cooked foods on the same plate or serving tray as raw foods. Wash all plates and serving trays with warm water and soap after raw foods have touched them.

**Cook:** use a clean meat thermometer to check the temperature of cooked foods. Meat thermometers will ensure that food is cooked thoroughly. Insert the thermometer in the thickest part of the meat to get the most accurate reading. Check temperatures toward the end of cooking times and off of the flame. Hamburgers (beef, pork, veal, or lamb) should reach at least 160 degrees. Chicken breasts should reach 165 degrees. Fish should flake easily with a fork, be firm, and reach at least 145 degrees. Wash the thermometer after each use. Keep hot foods hot. Store cooked foods in an insulated container away from cold foods. If serving baked beans with meats, make sure the beans are in an insulated container and stored in an insulated bag while they are waiting to be served. Hot dogs are fully cooked but should still be reheated to an internal temperature of 165 degrees; never eat or serve them raw, as they could have been contaminated after packaging. Never serve raw eggs, cook eggs until the yolks and whites are firm.

**Chill/Heat:** keep cold foods cold and keep hot foods hot. Make sure all foods that need to stay cold are stored in a cooler with ice or ice packs. Keep coolers in the shade and out of direct sunlight. Return all cold foods to the cooler after they have been served. It's best to keep cold drinks in a separate cooler as it will be opened more frequently and the inside temperature will warm up more quickly. When the weather climbs over 90 degrees, do not let food sit out for more than 1 hour. On cooler days, food can be kept at room temperature for up to 2 hours. After that time period, bacteria starts to grow rapidly and foods either need to be re-cooled, if a chilled item, or reheated, if a warm item, before serving. Keep foods out of the temperature danger zone 40-140 degrees.

**Foods that don't need to be kept hot or cold:** snack type foods like chips or pretzels, nuts and nut butters, dried fruits, crackers, breads, whole fruits like apples or bananas. Remember to keep foods covered while out for serving so dust, pets, and bugs don't touch the food. Set out a small quantity of all foods being served. More food can always be added, which will help keep the temperature of the food at a safe level.





## Seguridad de Alimentos



Tener una partida de campo o barbacoa en un parque, playa, o su patio son buenas maneras de pasar tiempo con familia juntos durante los meses de verano. Mantener los alimentos seguros es una buena idea para que todos puedan disfrutar de tiempo de calidad juntos y mantenerse a salvo. Hay algunas cosas que debe recordar cuando el clima es caliente. Los alimentos pueden perder rápidamente por lo que es mejor seguir 4 simples reglas : limpiar, separar, poner a enfriar, y cocinar.

**Limpiar:** antes de preparar comida y después de manipular alimentos, lávese bien las manos con agua tibia y jabón. Enseñe a niños cantar el “Cumpleaños Feliz” canción dos veces o lavarse durante al menos 20 segundo. Asegúrese de limpiar debajo de las uñas y las joyas antes lavarse las manos. Lave todos los utensilios de cocina, alimentos y envases de bebida

y enfriadores con agua tibia y jabón. Si se prepara la comida en un lugar lejos de casa, asegúrese de llevar una esponja, jabón, toallas de papel y agua embotellada para que las tablas de cortar y las superficies se pueden limpiar.

**Separar: evitar la contaminación cruzada por mantener los alimentos separados.** Mantenga las carnes crudas y mariscos en contenedores sellados o en bolsas de plástico zip por lo que sus jugos no entran en contacto con otros alimentos. Nunca coloque alimentos cocidos en el mismo plato o bandeja de servicio como los alimentos crudos. Lave todos los platos y bandejas con agua caliente y jabón después que los alimentos crudos les han tocado.

**Cocinar:** utilice un termómetro de carne para verificar la temperatura de los alimentos cocinados. Termómetro de carne va asegurar los alimentos se han cocinado a fondo. Inserta el termómetro en la parte mas gruesa de el carne para obtener el mas preciso medida. Revise la temperatura hacia el final de los tiempos de cocción. Hamburguesas (carne de res, cerdo, ternera o cordero) deben alcanzar por lo menos 160 grados. Pechugas de Pollo debe alcanzar 165 grados. Los peces deben flake fácilmente con un tenedor, ser firme, y llegar a por lo menos 145 grados. Lave el termómetro después de cada uso. Mantenga los alimentos cocinados calientes. Guarda los alimentos cocinados en un recipiente aislado de los alimentos fríos. Si sirve frijoles cocinados al orno con carne, asegúrese que los frijoles están en un recipiente aislado y almacenados en un bolso aislado mientras esperan para ser servido. Las salchichas deben ser completamente cocidas pero todavía recalentadas a una temperatura interna de 165 grados; Procura nunca comer o servir las crudas. Nunca sirve huevos crudos, huevos cocinados hasta que las yemas y claras son firmes.

**Poner a Enfriar:** mantenga los alimentos fríos, fríos y mantenga los alimentos calientes, calientes. Asegúrese de que todos los alimentos que necesitan mantenerse frío se almacenan en una hielera con hielo o bolsas de hielo. Mantenga las hieleras en la sombra y fuera de la luz directa del sol. Regresa todas las comidas frías a la hielera despues que ya los ha servido. Es mejor mantener bebidas frías en otro hielera como se abrirá con más frecuencia y el interior temperatura se calentará más rápidamente. Cuando el clima sube pasada 90 grados, no deje que la comida se cuede afuera por mas de una hora. En los días fríos, la comida puede mantenerse a temperatura ambiente durante un máximo de 2 horas. Despues de ese tiempo, bacteria empieza crecer rápidamente y las comidas necesitan estar Re-enfriado, si es una comida frío o recalentado, si es un comida caliente, antes de servir. Mantenga los alimentos fuera de la zona de peligro temperatura, 40-140 grados.

**Alimentos que no necesitan ser calentado o enfriado:** bocadillos tipo como patatas fritas o pretzels, nueces y mantequillas, frutos secos, galletas, panes, frutas como manzanas o bananas. Recuerde que debe mantener los alimentos cubiertos mientras se sirven para evitar que el polvo, animales domésticos y insectos no toquen los alimentos. Establecen una pequeña cantidad de todos los alimentos que se sirve. Siempre se pueden agregar más alimentos que ayudarán a mantener la temperatura de los alimentos a un nivel seguro.

