

Dear Students and Parents,

Please take the time to read this packet of information on exercise and eating healthy. Hopefully it will give you some tips to help your family lead an active, healthy lifestyle.

Tips to think about:

1. Check out the food pyramid at <http://www.mypyramid.gov/kids/> You can type in your child's age and gender and get a list of the foods and the amounts they should be eating. If you click on each color of the pyramid and then click on "learn more" you will get a list of foods for that food group. It also has a cool interactive game that students can play with a rocket and food choices. Click on the food, drag it to the rocket and it will tell you how many servings and the student can click No Thanks or Accept. They have to fill the rocket with all the correct food groups and 60 minutes of exercise in order for the rocket to blast off.
2. Chew each mouthful of food many times to help with digestion.
3. Eat slowly; it takes 20 minutes for your brain to realize you are full.
4. Use a smaller plate to make it look like you are eating more. Put your fork down in between bites. Watch out for portion distortion! One serving of meat is the size of your palm. One cup of pasta or cereal is one serving, having a large bowl full could equal 2-3 servings so be careful. More servings equal more calories.
5. The calories we eat in one day must equal the calories we use up in a day to stay at the same weight! To lose one pound a week a person should cut back 3500 calories a week or 500 calories a day and add exercise.
6. Drink a lot of water throughout the day. Some people say to drink 6-12 glasses of water a day. Others say to drink half of your body weight in ounces a day. For example: if a student weighs 64 pounds she/he would need to drink 32 oz. of water a day. Some doctors disagree and state that everyone is different. We do know water is the best thing to drink and we need it to keep all the systems in our body working well.
7. Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables every day. (Great snack choices)
8. Limit fruit juices, most juice boxes contain as much sugar as a bag of M&M's.
9. Treat candy, cookies, cakes and other sweets as special occasion foods. However, we have a lot of special occasions in our lives and maybe we should think of peanut butter and celery as a special food. Wouldn't it be nice if we could all change our way of thinking.

10. Watch out for bad oils. French fries are terrible if fried in fat. Making homemade potato wedges in the oven would be a healthier choice. Small changes have big results over time. In many recipes try using apple sauce instead of oil for a healthier option.
11. Try to buy whole grain products. Refining flour for example, removes 80% of the B vitamins and all of the fiber. Enriching returns only 4 of the 14 original vitamins and minerals and none of the fiber!
12. Know how to read labels. Check the serving size, amount of calories and all ingredients listed. Ingredients are listed by weight. If any type of sugar is listed first this is a poor food choice. Be careful, the people selling the product know you will read the first ingredient so they will use three different types of sugar so they can spread it out to try and make the food look healthier than it is. For example: you may see corn sweetener, honey and sugar all listed on the same label! This adds up to a lot of sugar!
13. Stay away from the junk food aisle, don't shop when you are hungry and don't let your children talk you into buying junk food. I know it is hard when we lead such busy lives but we as parents need to teach our children how to eat the correct foods now while they can develop good eating habits! Eating healthy and exercising is one of the most important things you can do for your self and your family. (Remember no one is perfect but we can try to improve.)
14. Read about toxins and artificial sweeteners and how they affect the body.
15. Limit processed foods and try organic fruits and vegetables.
16. Soda has no nutritional value. One can of cola has 12 teaspoons of sugar in it. Diet soda has no nutritional value and may throw off the balance of your body systems because of the artificial sweeteners.
17. Limit the white stuff...white flour, white sugar, and salt. Remember salt is light in weight and may be listed last on a label so you may want to pay attention to the amount listed on the other part of the label.
18. Did you know that in the early 1800's the average American consumed 10 pounds of sugar per year? Today, the average person consumes 170 pounds in one year! When you consider all the cakes, cookies, donuts and processed foods that are available to us, that number is not surprising. It is however, very damaging to your body. Refined sugar passes quickly into the bloodstream in large amounts, giving the stomach, pancreas and brain a shock. It delivers high energy but then it leads to a blood-sugar imbalance ("crash") and that leads to further craving for sugar!
19. Sugar consumption is associated with hyperactivity, behavior problems, lack of concentration, violent tendencies, bone loss and dental decay. Sugar also leads to obesity, hypoglycemia, high blood pressure, and heart disease and is a major contributing factor to Type II Diabetes. The good news is that we can control this with healthy choices and exercise.
20. Children learn best by example. So take the lead. Not only will you feel better knowing that your children are eating healthier, you are going to be surprised to find out how good you feel.