OPTIMAL HEALTH GUIDELINES FOR CHILDREN

Children have an especially high need for daily well-balance nutrition in order to best cope with their active life and their growing physical bodies. Here are some basic suggestions to help you support your children at this time of life.

Provide regular, well- balanced meals that include a substantial block of protein, which could be in the form of eggs, meat, cheese, nut butters, mixed nuts, or beans. Each meal should provide about 15-20 grams of protein, and some good complex carbohydrates, like vegetables, or fruits. Starting the day with a protein smoothie made with whey protein (available here, or at the Marquette Food Co-Op.) and fresh or frozen fruit which can be quickly prepared, or eggs or turkey bacon can make a real difference in a child’s emotional state and energy level throughout the morning. Having no breakfast, or only cereal or toast provides mainly carbohydrates, which do not keep the blood sugar level stable for several hours. The brain needs a steady supply of sugar to keep it functioning optimally, and a combination of protein and complex carbohydrates does this best. Cook foods without microwaving since this process alters and destroys the vital nutrients in foods. For more information search: microwave, on [www.mercola.com](http://www.mercola.com) website.

Keep a variety of healthy snack foods on hand at home. These will provide additional nutrients for sustaining optimal energy levels without the hyperactivity associated with high sugar processed food intake. Trail mix, cheese, fresh fruits and veggies, protein bars and smoothies are easy to keep on hand and good sources of vitamins, minerals and proteins. Limit the availability of soda pop, candy and other sugared snacks, since they depress the immune system and provide only empty calories without nutrients. Soda pop is especially detrimental to good health, since it dehydrates the body, depletes calcium stores and causes blood sugar to become very unstable. Artificially sweetened pop is highly undesirable. A good website for information on aspartame and other artificial sweeteners is [www.mercola.com](http://www.mercola.com), the website of Dr. Joseph Mercola, a medical doctor whose passion is informing the public about important health issues.

Filtered water should be the drink of preference (CWR water filters remove fluoride if your city adds it to the supply), and can be encouraged by providing your child with a hard plastic Nalgene pint water bottle (available at Down Wind Sports or Target) to keep at school for easy access to water. The brain functions best when it is hydrated, and that means drinking half of the body weight in ounces each day of pure water. This does not include soda pop, tea, juice or coffee. Drinking adequate water can make a big difference in energy and ability to focus and concentrate in school.

A high-quality, natural multi-vitamin/mineral supplement can provide additional nutritional support for growing children. The B-Complex family of vitamins is especially important, as they do not store in the body and are quickly used up in times of stress. They should be taken twice daily with breakfast and supper. Choose high quality supplements that are free of artificial coloring, flavoring, sugar, and other fillers and binders. You will find the best sources to be natural food stores, like the Marquette Food Co-Op.

**RECIPES**

**TRAIL MIX**

Mix any variety of nuts and seeds that may include almonds, walnuts, pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, and small amounts of unsweetened dried fruit (such as apples, mango, pineapple, dried cranberries) available at The Flying Moose or Marquette Food Co-Op.

**WHEY PROTEIN SMOOTHIE**

2-4 tablespoons of whey protein powder ½ teaspoon vitamin C powder (optional)

¾ cup non-dairy milk product (coconut or almond milk) Blend until creamy

¼ cup of fresh or frozen berries or a ½ banana

2-3 ice cubes (optional)