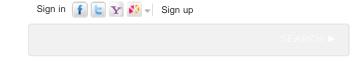
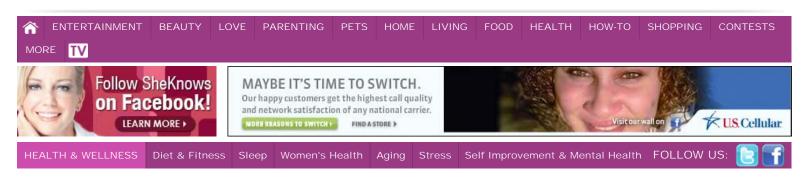
# Health & Wellness





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### Healthy kids: Back to school nutrition basics

## **RAISING HEALTHY EATERS**

Posted on Aug 15, 2011 8:41 AM by Sharon Richter, MS,RD,CDN

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The new school year is just around the corner, which means it's time to start thinking about back-to-school nutrition. A recent Vitamin Shoppe survey found that only four in 10 (38 percent) of moms and dads take a daily vitamin, compared to 56 percent of non-parents. Even fewer parents pass on this habit to their children. Only one-third (34 percent) of kids get a daily vitamin. So how can you make sure your children are getting the nutrients they need? Here are four basic tips to help your children stay healthy as they head back to the classroom.





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GIVE YOUR KIDS A KID-FRIENDLY SUPPLEMENT

As a parent, it's hard to know which nutrients are best for your child when there's so much conflicting research out there. In fact, the same Vitamin Shoppe survey found that nearly 60 percent of American parents said that it was a challenge to know which vitamins and supplements they need to give their children. There are certain essentials you should keep in mind. For example, vitamin C plays an important role in boosting your child's immunity and vitamin D can help keep your child's bones strong. With very busy schedules it is not always easy to cook a well-balanced meal, so as a safety net, give your child a multivitamin with his/her breakfast.

PACK YOUR KIDS LUNCH

Children's vitamins come in a variety of tasty flavors and are available as gummies, chews or drops, so there's

something for everyone.

We all know that many school lunches often include -- or even feature -- unhealthy foods like pizza and french fries. Children also don't always

know how to create a balanced plate when they're in the

cafeteria, so it's important to discuss with your children what they are choosing at lunchtime. Whenever possible, opt out of the school lunch program and spend a few extra minutes putting together a lunch that is filled with foods that are rich in the nutrients a growing child needs. If you're pressed for time, do this the night before and store in the refrigerator so you can simply grab and go in the morning.

RID YOUR KITCHEN OF PROCESSED FOODS

Most children develop their eating habits based on what they are fed at home. After all, parents are the ones doing the shopping, so it's important to keep the home stocked with healthy snacks. If a child opens the refrigerator and sees fruits and veggies, he or she will grab them. Many items found at your local grocery are perfect for snacking. Baby carrots are a great alternative to a bag of chips and are a good source of vitamins A, B, C and K, and magnesium. Instead of serving ice cream for dessert, give your child a bowl of strawberries, which are rich in vitamin C, antioxidants and phytonutrients and help in the prevention of many diseases.

**GET YOUR CHILDREN INVOLVED** 

Asking your children what they would like to eat will make them feel like they're part of the process, thus more willing to eat a healthy lunch. If they say pizza, use whole wheat dough and top it with fresh veggies; if they say french fries, use sweet potato fries and

bake them instead of frying, or try other vegetables such as jicama. Talk to your children about

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- 1. Do your kids bring lunch or buy lunch at school?
  - They bring lunch from home
  - They buy lunch at school.
  - It varies, depending on what's on the school menu.

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foods that are good for you and will help them grow strong and smart. A great way to introduce nutrient-dense foods is by keeping the diet as colorful as possible. Each vitamin/mineral is represented by a different hue, such as red in tomatoes, watermelon and red peppers, and green in lettuce, cucumbers and celery.

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Sharon Richter is a registered dietitian in private practice in Manhattan. Prior to working in private practice, Sharon was the director of nutrition for The Tiger Schulmann's Karate (TSK) organization. While working for this organization Sharon developed a nutritional supplement line, conducted nutrition seminars, and developed a nutrition certification program for all instructors. Sharon sits on the medical/executive board for Healthination, Gojee Seed, WITS (wellness in the schools) and Sports For Youth. She enjoys living in New York City where she runs in Central Park, spins and lifts weights.

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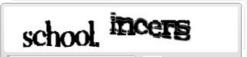
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