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BACK 2 SCHOOL: BEATING THE BACK-PACK SNACK ATTACK

Children will soon be arriving by the bus-load, all across the Nation, to start a new and exciting year of school. Back-pack bustling little ones will haul oversized book-bags, making them have the center of gravity akin to a turtle. If turned on their back, a return to their feet may be a challenge.

What is in those back-packs? For more than a few it isn't just paper, pencils and books. Food is the likely culprit, as the all-too-large back-pack seems to have obscured, if not replaced, many of the Scooby-Do, Speed Racer, or other favorite lunch boxes. With the larger packing space, and need to keep the packs at hand, snacks have moved into the classroom to be munched by some, over and above what they already eat in the lunchroom.

Teachers as a group seem to frown on students munching on

back-pack snacks in their classrooms. Making sure this insider's tip is shared with your youngster before the first day might be a good idea. At our house all food is kept in a separate lunch container with a clear admonition not to open anywhere outside of the lunch area. Armed with this rule, and assuming your tot will not have a cell-phone ringing in the back-pack, you will be able to keep the back-pack from becoming an issue on the first day.



How about some food for thought? Last-year's Halloween candy should have been discarded before Christmas and is definitely on the "don't" list. Related candies, Twinkies, and sugar sodas need to be limited to sparing, off-campus, use. The American Academy of Pediatrics, not surprisingly, takes a dim view on these.

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Happy Healthy eating needs to start before adulthood health problems set in. Obesity, adult diabetes, osteoporosis, heart disease, iron deficiency anemia, and tooth decay are all on the

list of problems associated with poor eating habits started while young. Pediatricians note that obesity among the nation's children has more than doubled over the past twenty years.

Research demonstrates that snacking on high sugar treats allow the oral bacteria to feast, reproduce, and eliminate acid all over the teeth. It is the elimination of acids that dissolve the tooth structure, leading to what are commonly known as cavities.

Pediatricians also note that children who have a more healthy diet will score higher on standardized achievement tests. Hunger pangs, or rapid blood sugar swings are at odds with concentration. Further, good nutrition is necessary for optimal immune protection. Children who miss too much school can fall behind in their school work, and this, in most cases, can simply be solved by what your youngster eats!

The best back to school foods are the following, well-known, old stand-bys: dried, fresh, or canned fruit, sliced veggies, PB&J (or other) sandwich, milk, fruit juices, nuts, and cheese cubes. You don't have to totally eliminate the chips, cookies, and sweet treats, just reasonably monitor them and sparingly dole out their supply. For the most part our children eat only what we pay for. So for the most part, parents still should easily maintain control.

By Michael G Anderson MD FAAP
Med Director & Asst Professor of Pediatrics
CHILDREN'S Pediatrics Center: East Main[®]

770.720.MyMD (6963)

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