

# HANDS-ON Health

Health Wave Newsletter, September 2007

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## Welcome Back to the 2007-2008 School Year

We hope everyone had a relaxing, yet physically active summer. Although weather patterns remained somewhat unpredictable, the summer months provided ample opportunity to enjoy outdoor sports, water and leisure activities.

As the new school year gets under way Health Wave is offering **free shipping** to our existing customers. Do you have new teachers or new classes starting this year? Do you need Teacher Manuals or replacement items for your staff?

Call 800-374-7953 or check out our website [HealthWaveInc.com](http://HealthWaveInc.com) for an updated list of materials for each grade level. Look it over, place your order and enjoy the new school year. Orders can be faxed to 203-975-7946 or you can call 800-374-7953 to speak to a representative.



## Back to School Means Back to Sleep

A good night's sleep is as important to children as a healthy breakfast for best school performance, says the National Sleep Foundation (NSF).

According to NSF, too many school-age children get less sleep than experts recommend — about 9.25 hours/night for teens, and between 9-11 hours for younger children (5-12). (The recommended amount of sleep for the average adult is between 7-9 hours/night).

While it takes time to adjust to new classes, new teachers and a new school year, perhaps the hardest adjustment is the one that permits students to get all the sleep they need. For many students, summertime offers a reprieve from homework and rigid

schedules. It also often means later bedtimes and wake times. Many parents allow their children to stay up later at night and wake up later in the morning, and day camps often start an hour or more later than school. As a result, back to school hours can be very stressful for students — while they need to maximize their sleep to perform best in new activities and classes, their bodies are still lingering on summer schedules.

So what can you do to help your children fight off back to school sleepiness?

National Sleep Foundation offers the following tips:

**Start the school year sleep routine early.** Introduce a gradual change in a child's sleep schedule one or two

### In This Newsletter:

#### Getting a Good Night's Sleep

Find out what the experts are saying.

(see pages 1-2)

#### Celebrate Fruit and Vegetable Month

Learn why it's essential to sample the complete color spectrum every day to get the full preventive benefits of fruits and vegetables. (see pages 2-3) Find out what steps parents can take at home. (see page 4)

week's before the first day of school such as going to bed 15-30 minutes earlier each night.

**Make sufficient sleep a family priority.** Every family member must make a good night's sleep a regular part of his/her daily schedule.

**Encourage good sleep habits for all family members.** These should include a nightly bedtime routine such as 15-30 minutes of relaxing, quiet activities immediately prior to bedtime, as well as regular bed and wake up times.

**Create a special comfortable place for sleep.** The bedroom (or other sleeping quarters) should be cool, quiet, and dark. Televisions and computers should be placed in another room. Some children and teens find soft music helps them relax and get ready to fall asleep.

**Achieve a balanced schedule.** Identify and prioritize activities that allow for downtime and sufficient sleep time. Help students avoid an overloaded schedule that can lead to stress and difficulty coping, which contribute to poor health and sleep problems.



**Look for signs of sleep problems.** The most common sleep problems in children include difficulty falling asleep, nighttime awakenings, stalling and resisting going to bed. Snoring, which can be a symptom of sleep apnea, is prevalent among children and teens. Excessive daytime sleepiness can be a symptom of a sleep problem such as narcolepsy. If your child exhibits any of these symptoms, discuss them with your doctor or other health care provider.

For more information about sleep-related issues, visit NSF's Web site. Children ages 10 and under should visit the special NSF site, [www.sleepforkids.org](http://www.sleepforkids.org).

## Celebrate Fruit and Vegetable Month

It's essential to get a colorful variety of fruits and vegetables into your diet every day! Why? Because colorful fruits and vegetables provide the wide range of vitamins, minerals, fiber and phytochemicals your body uses to stay healthy and fit. Many of the phytochemicals and other compounds that make fruits and vegetables good for us also give them their color. That's why it's essential to sample the complete color spectrum every day to get the full preventive benefits of fruits and vegetables.

### BLUE/PURPLE

Blue/purple fruits and vegetables contain varying amounts of health-promoting phytochemicals such as anthocyanins and phenolics, currently being studied for their antioxidant and anti-

aging benefits. Include **BLUE/PURPLE** in your low-fat diet to help maintain:

- A lower risk of some cancers \*
- Urinary tract health
- Memory function
- Healthy aging

Get blue/purple every day with foods such as: blackberries, blueberries, black currants, dried plums, elderberries, pur-



ple figs, purple grapes, plums, raisins, purple cabbage, eggplant, purple belgian endive, purple peppers, potatoes (purple fleshed), black salsify



### GREEN

Green vegetables contain varying amounts of phytochemicals such as lutein and indoles, which interest researchers

because of their potential antioxidant, health-promoting benefits. Include **GREEN** in your low-fat diet to maintain:

- A lower risk of some cancers\*
- Vision health
- Strong bones and teeth

Go green every day with fruits and vegetables like these: avocados, green apples, green grapes, honeydew, kiwifruit, limes, green pears, artichokes, arugula, asparagus, broccoflower, broccoli, broccoli rabe, brussels sprouts, chinese cabbage, green beans, green cabbage, celery, chayote squash, cucumbers, endive, leafy greens, leeks, lettuce, green onion, okra, peas, green pepper, snow peas, sugar snap peas, spinach, watercress, zucchini



### WHITE

White, tan, and brown fruits and vegetables contain varying amounts of phytochemicals of interest to scientists. These include allicin,

found in the garlic and onion family. The mineral selenium, found in mushrooms, is also the subject of research. Including **WHITE** in your low-fat diet helps maintain:

- Heart health
- Cholesterol levels that are already healthy
- A lower risk of some cancers\*

Get all the health benefits of white by including foods such as: bananas, brown pears, dates, white nectarines, white peaches, cauliflower, garlic, ginger, jerusalem artichoke, jicama, kohlrabi, mushrooms, onions, parsnips, potatoes (white fleshed), shallots, turnips, white corn



### YELLOW/ ORANGE

Yellow and orange fruits and vegetables contain varying amounts of antioxidants such as vitamin C as well as

carotenoids and bioflavonoids, two classes of phytochemicals that scientists are studying for their health-promoting potential. Including **YELLOW/ORANGE** in your low-fat diet helps maintain:

- A healthy heart
- Vision health
- A healthy immune system
- A lower risk of some cancers\*

Choose Yellow/Orange fruits and vegetables like: yellow apples, apricots, cantaloupe, cape gooseberries, yellow figs, grapefruit, golden kiwifruit, lemons, mangoes, nectarines, oranges, papayas, peaches, yellow pears, persimmons, pineapples, tangerines, yellow watermelon, yellow beets, butternut squash, carrots, yellow peppers, yellow potatoes, pumpkin, rutabagas, yellow summer squash, sweet corn, sweet potatoes, yellow tomatoes, yellow winter squash



### RED

Specific phytochemicals in the red group that are being studied for their health-promoting properties include lycopene and anthocyanins.

Include a variety of **RED** fruits and vegetables in your low-fat diet to help maintain:

- A healthy heart
- Memory function
- A lower risk of some cancers\*
- Urinary tract health

Include RED fruits and vegetables in your diet such as: red apples, cherries, cranberries, red grapes, pink/red grapefruit, red pears, pomegranates, raspberries, strawberries, watermelon, beets, red peppers, radishes, radicchio, red onions, red potatoes, rhubarb, tomatoes

Risk factors related to poor nutrition and fitness make up four of the top ten leading causes of death in the United States . According to the Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent Overweight and Obesity, approximately 300,000 deaths each year result from diseases involving poor diets or inadequate physical activity. Among preventable causes, only smoking is associated with more deaths in the United States.

One of the greatest challenges facing educators is to empower students to value the importance of good nutrition and physical activity, so they can select a well-balanced variety of nutritious foods and participate in regular physical activity.

\* Low-fat diets rich in fruits and vegetables and low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of some types of cancer, a disease associated with many factors.

# Parents, Are You Leading the Way?

## Fruits, Vegetables, and Physical Activity Action Steps Parents Can Take at Home

**1.** Keep a variety of ready-to-eat fruits and vegetables available. For example:

- Keep fresh fruit in a bowl on the counter. Choose items that are easy to grab and eat, such as apples, pears, plums, and grapes.
- Keep easy-to-eat vegetables in the refrigerator to grab as snacks, such as cherry tomatoes, sugar snap peas, baby carrots, and multi-colored bell pepper strips.
- Serve a fruit or vegetable with every meal and snack. You can put out a bowl of carrots and celery that kids can snack on while dinner is being prepared.
- Bring home a new fruit or vegetable every once in a while. Learn how to prepare it, and encourage your kids to try it. Have your kids ever seen papaya, kiwifruit, baby bok choy, flavored sprouts, butternut squash, or broccolini?
- Keep frozen fruits and vegetables and canned beans available as easy additions to dinner. It's easy and tasty to add some frozen peas to a pasta dish or some kidney beans to a soup.

**2.** Try to sit down for a meal with your children at least once a day. Research has shown that when kids eat on their own, they are less likely to eat healthy food, including fruits and vegetables. And mealtime is the perfect occasion to talk with your children about fruits and vegetables. You could ask, for example:

- How many servings of fruits and vegetables have you eaten so far today?
- How many are in the current meal?
- What fruits and vegetables should we have tomorrow night?

**3.** Include your kids in choosing fruits and vegetables, whether that means making the grocery list together or coming along to the store. For example:

- Ask your kids to select their favorite fruits and vegetables at the store. Put them in charge of making creative green salads or healthy fruit salads.

- Take your kids to a great farmer's market or a beautiful supermarket produce section. Talk about the wide variety that's available, and what you could do with different produce items. Take home a few new things and experiment together.
- Have your kids help prepare fruits and vegetables for meals and snacks. Kids can help wash fresh fruits and vegetables, add them to recipes, or make salads.



**4.** Understand the health benefits of fruits and vegetables, so that you'll be able to help your kids understand why it's so important to eat them.

**5.** Be physically active. Staying active and eating healthy go hand-in-hand – it's critical to do both in order to achieve better health.

- Children should get 60 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity on 5 days of the week or more.
- Encourage kids to participate in activities that get them moving – like sports, dance, swimming, or outdoor games – instead of watching TV.
- Make physical activity part of family time. Play a game outside, or take a bike ride together to a local park for a healthy, fruit-and-vegetable-filled picnic.

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