



THE CATHOLIC ACADEMY
OF STAMFORD

Packing Healthy School Meals

In this month's newsletter, by popular request from our very own classroom teachers at the academy, they would like the newsletter to focus on supporting the packing of healthy and protein-rich lunches and snacks for the children. We sometimes find that students will say, "I am hungry," and it may be because they have finished what is in their lunch bag or do not have a snack to enjoy.

I have found some resources that may help in packing a colorful, protein-rich lunch and snacks to make the children's days flow a little easier:

According to the Harvard School of Public Health:

"When packing your child's lunches, let the Kids' Healthy Eating Plate guide and inspire you:

- Remember two points - choices and presentation.
- Save time with meal prep.
- Build super snacks to fill the gaps between meals.
- Send a refillable water bottle.
- Sending variety works better than big portions.
- Different colors and textures make it more exciting to eat.
- Packing a good amount of what they actually like.

Choices:

"1. Choose any 1 fresh fruit. For example: grapes, apple slices or rings, any melon chunks (cantalope, honeydew, watermelon), any berries (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries), or banana slices.

2. Choose any 2 vegetables. For example: carrot sticks, cucumber, broccoli, bell pepper strips, asparagus spears, summer squash ribbons, or grape tomatoes.

3. Choose any 1 healthy protein. For example: Beans, edamame, nut-free trail mixes, nut-free butters, hummus, veggie burgers, roasted turkey, or chicken slices, or a hard boiled egg.

4. Choose any 1 whole grain. For example: whole grain pasta, bread, and crackers, brown rice, quinoa, steel-cut oats, and other minimally processed whole grains.

5. Incorporating dairy. For example: milk, greek yogurt, small amounts of cheese like cottage cheese, and string cheese.

Then, in addition to a protein-rich lunch, comes snack time!

Super Snacks

"Snacks are meant to fill the gap between meals, not become a whole meal in itself. Keep snacks small. An easy rule of thumb for a satisfying snack is to pair a protein-rich food with a carb-rich food. Including healthy fat. Depending on the child's age and activity level, they may need one or two snacks a day".

Examples:

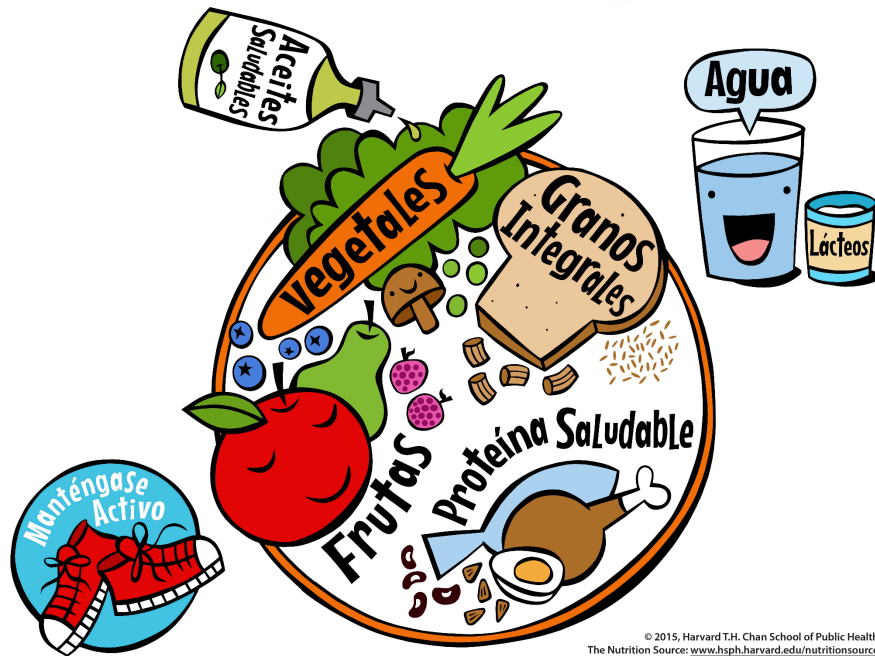
Whole wheat crackers, apple slices, chickpeas, dried fruit, string cheese, fruit, nut free butters, berries, and yogurt, nut-free butters on whole wheat pita, carrot sticks or sliced veggies, and hummus.

And, lastly, a water bottle. Sometimes students forget their water bottle at home, and we do have cups available, but bringing a water bottle every day is important. If you are having a hard time bringing in a water bottle, you may bring reusable cups and have the teacher save them for your children in the classroom.

Overall, a protein-rich lunch and snack are important for academic success. When students are physically satisfied, their brains and emotions are much more regulated, focused, and ready to learn. Healthy, protein-rich eating is important for the overall development of the brain, body, and mind, as well as for the building of strong bones and an overall healthy child.



El **PLato** para **Comer Saludable** para **Niños**



Thank you,
Mrs. Grijalva

References

Packing a Healthy Lunchbox. (2019, August 21). The Nutrition Source.
<https://nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/kids-healthy-lunchbox-guide/>

Harvard T.H Chan School of Public Health 2015 (Photograph) [Kid's Healthy Eating Plate • The Nutrition Source](#)