

Fun In The **S**un

Summer is a time for kids to swim, play and eat. They now have the opportunity to relax after another hectic year of school and fun in the sun is all they can think about. That means when you are choosing foods for your children and their summer activities, you should keep certain things in mind.

First, it is very easy for smaller people, such as children, to become dehydrated. Water should be number one on the list of foods your kid should eat/drink. Many children try to rehydrate themselves by drinking soda and juices. Both contain high amounts of sugar and do not hydrate the body as well as plain water. For kids who don't like the taste of water, parents can add lemon or lime to make a refreshing drink. Single packets of rehydration powders are also available to add to water to help the taste and help fluid intake.

Number two on the list for summer foods should be fresh fruits and vegetables. This the time of year that produce is at it's very best so go a little crazy and experiment. Plan a Saturday morning during June or July to check out a local farmer's market. Make sure you bring your kids along so they can learn about new foods and new ways to prepare foods. Choose at least one new piece of produce and try a new recipe. Let the kids help in picking this new item and helping you cook it once it is home. Kids are more likely to try a new food if they are included in the process of purchasing and preparing the food. Who knows, this may become a new family tradition after you see how much fun and beneficial this time can be.

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The last thing on your summer food list should be healthy snacks. Summer activities take a lot of energy and kids must have snacks to refuel. Who hasn't gone to a swimming party and then returned home just starving? Once again the fresh produce would be a good idea. Smoothies made from fruit and yogurt can provide a cool, refreshing drink on a hot day. Peanut butter on celery, apples, banana, etc can be a quick, power-packed snack. For a big group, a pizza bar that includes dessert pizzas with fruit and healthy pizzas with lots of different vegetables could provide a fun and creative way to get something healthy in their bodies.

When you plan for a long, fun summer day, make sure you plan for healthy foods for you and your kids. Encourage them to drink their fluids to stay hydrated. Spend a Saturday at a farmer's market and try new foods. Make snakes for your kids that give them the energy they need for yet another summer adventure.