

School Days

It's a time of pure chaos. New pencils, notebooks, jeans, and shoes are being bought. Anticipation mixed with dread is felt by you and your kids. Yes, it's that time of year again- school is staring.

Among all the madness as the first day approaches, one thing can help. Healthy afternoon snacks don't have to add to your stress level. When preparing for empty stomachs when the kids arrive home, you want to provide the most fulfilling, quickest and easiest choices as possible. Sandwiches usually fit this description. Whether it is the old standby peanut butter and jelly or a more sturdy ham and cheese, these should refuel the kids and not leave you stuck in the kitchen for long periods of time. Make sure you are providing whole grain bread and lots of vegetables and fruits in the sandwich. This can be a time of creativity for you and/or your kids. Dress up a 'PB&J' with raisins or sliced bananas, apples or peaches. Try preserves with less sugar. For other meat-based sandwiches, add different vegetables and cheeses. Try fresh avocado slices or provolone cheese on an old favorite. Try different types of breads to make a nice change.

If sandwiches aren't your thing, you may want to try other options. As the weather cools, a nice warm baked red potato or sweet potato can welcome the kids home. Add steamed broccoli and cheese to the red potato for a savory treat. Encourage eating the skin of the potato for extra fiber. On the sweet potato, add a small amount of butter and brown sugar. The kids will think they are getting a special treat and you will know you are providing the highest of nutrition to their little bodies.

For extra busy times that you don't have the opportunity to fix a snack for them, here is a helpful tip. Keep a bowl of fresh fruit on the table or counter and fresh veggies and dip in the refrigerator. This will give them the chance to get a healthy snack when they are ready and not choose something like chips or cookies.

School Days

As you prepare for that first day of school and you feel the stress levels rise, take a breather. You have things under control. You don't have to fear or dread school starting again. It's going to be a great, and healthy, year.