

Managing Munchies: More healthy weight ideas

Standing in line at a fast food restaurant off an East coast highway during spring break, I overheard the cashier greet the family in front of me by name. I cringed. Was the family a regular customer at the chain? Hopefully, they were just ☒ friends with the cashier.

Most of us, including me, are not always health food angels. However, a family who is a regular customer at a fast food restaurant may simply not know how to break the habit. For those who still need to get those healthy eating New Year's resolutions rolling, our February podcast, "Helping the Overweight Child," gave the 5-4-3-2-1-0 rules for healthy eating. This post gives more hints:

BMI, or Body Mass Index (weight in kg divided by height in meters squared) is a number which indicates whether your child's weight is normal for his or her height and age. Normal weight school aged kids DO look a bit scrawny. Children's bellies should NOT hang over their pants. On the other hand, normal weight toddlers do look a bit pudgy. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has a nice BMI calculator.

Snacks aren't needed at sports games which last only an hour. Supply water bottles and forget the snack.

Don't feed your younger child snacks to keep him occupied during an older sibling's event. Bring books, paper and crayons, a doll, or a matchbox car instead.

Make a stack of peanut butter and jelly or cheese sandwiches and keep them wrapped, ready to go, in the fridge. Keep some washed apple slices or carrot sticks along side the sandwiches and this stash can be your "fast

food” at those times you need to feed your family “on the run”.

Don’t give your children a junky snack in order to carry them over until dinner. If your kids come home from school STARVING!!, give them a REAL dinner, and then give them a fruit or vegetable when the entire family later sits down.

A holiday is one day, Halloween is October 31st. · Why eat the candy for days and weeks afterwards?

Don’t keep junk food in your home. This will avoid arguments about what to eat.

Have your children ask you if they can have something to eat, rather than allowing “free access” to your pantry/refrigerator. That allows you decide if it is too close to mealtime to have a snack (remember from the Picky Eaters blog post, “hunger is the best sauce”) and will allow you to choose an appropriate snack and portion size. If kids inherently knew healthy choices and portion sizes, they wouldn’t need parents! Also this allows you to determine if the child is truly hungry, bored, or attention seeking.

Now back to the the fast food establishment I find myself in with my family. “Maybe this restaurant chain should offer a Two Peds in a Pod kid’s lunch box,” I mused as my family finished up their greasy, salty meal. Everyone’s curiosity was piqued. My husband and I began to hypothesize what kind of food would be inside a Two Peds box.

“What do you think?” I asked the kids.

“We’re actually more interested in what kind of prize would you would offer,” they said.

Gotta love my regular customers.

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