

News in Your School

Berkeley Township School District

May 2019

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RD Corner



Hello! My name is Meredith Hesselein and I am your school Registered Dietitian.

My main goals are to teach students lifelong healthy eating habits and to keep you up to date on food and nutrition news.

If you have any questions or comments, feel free to contact me at:
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Breaking Your Gradeschooler's Unhealthy Food Habit

Just like any good investment, teaching your child healthy habits now will pay off in the long run. Kids who nibble on nutrient-rich foods from a young age are more likely to maintain those good habits later in life. Although it can be easy for families to slip into unhealthy food habits, with some practice, you can steer your child toward healthier choices.

Beyond Restriction

When you're trying to break an unhealthy food habit, forbidding certain foods that already are in the home may lead to behavioral problems such as tantrums and sneaking food. The more you restrict a certain food, the more tempting it will be for children. That is why food should not be labeled as "good" or "bad," nor should it be restricted. Instead, keep less nutritious food at home so kids know it's available and they don't have to sneak it. Ask them how eating "fun" or "play" foods such as desserts makes them feel physically and emotionally. Talk to them about how it feels to eat too much and how they can eat a satisfying amount without feeling uncomfortable.

Focus on Nutritious Foods

Be sure to have plenty of healthful alternatives available to fill the spot of any foods you may have removed from the home. Wash and cut fresh fruits and vegetables into pieces ahead of time; then, place them within easy reach in the refrigerator. Gradeschoolers feel more independent when they have options, so try keeping a snack drawer of healthier items and let them choose a food from it every day. If you want your kids to eat more fruit, offer it pre-sliced or cut in fun shapes.

Learning to Like New Foods

A carrot may not be as exciting as a cookie — at first. But take heart, stick with the plan and celebrate small victories as you make gradual changes.

Eating is a learned behavior and just as kids learn how to ride a bike by falling numerous times, they learn how to eat by trying new foods at least 15 times. If they don't like it, no problem. Don't force it, but try again.

As you make a commitment to healthier eating, you'll reap some great benefits — both now and in the future. Setting up children for a lifelong habit of a healthy relationship with food will help them live a more productive and enjoyable life.

Adapted From: eatright.org
Written by: Andrea Johnson, RD, CSP, LDN
Published November 7, 2018

<https://www.eatright.org/food/nutrition/healthy-eating/breaking-your-gradeschoolers-unhealthy-food-habit>



Crispy Kale Chips

Once just decoration in grocery store meat coolers, kale is now hailed as king of healthy greens. Packed full of vitamin A, vitamin K, vitamin C, and fiber, kale chips are a great substitute for other crispy chips, such as potato chips or corn chips. Instead of being fried and heavily salted, you can season these baked chips however you'd like. And its a fun way for picky eaters to eat their greens!

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 head or bunch of kale, washed thoroughly
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- Sea salt for seasoning, or seasoning of choice

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat the oven to 275F.
2. Remove the ribs, or stem, from the kale (grip the bottom of the stem with one hand and use your other hand to rip the leaves from the stem). Cut or rip into 1 ½ inch pieces.
3. Lay on a baking sheet and toss with the olive oil and salt (or seasoning of your choice).
4. Bake until crisp, turning the leaves halfway through, about 20 minutes. Serve as finger food.



Source:
Crispy Kale "Chips"
Courtesy of Melissa D'Arabian

<https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/melissa-darabian/crispy-kale-chips-recipe-1923723>