Recipe for a Bright Future

Texas Style

Don't eat just to fill up. Eat so you can grow up strong, healthy and smart. A growing body – and that includes your brain – needs healthy food with plenty of vitamins and minerals. Choose food that is tasty and healthy – then have fun growing!



Your Bodyguard

INGREDIENT: Vitamin C

DIRECTIONS: Vitamin C is like your own personal bodyguard. It boosts your body's ability to fight off disease and heal wounds, while working double time to help keep teeth and gums healthy. Your body does not store vitamin C, so it is important to have at least one vitamin C-rich food every day.

SHOPPING LIST: Find vitamin C in oranges, watermelons, peaches, grapefruit, blueberries, cantaloupes, honeydew, limes, lemons, strawberries and tomatoes. Also look for green and red peppers, chili peppers, spinach, broccoli, cabbage, potatoes and sweet potatoes.

Looking Good

INGREDIENT: Vitamin A

DIRECTIONS: For good eyesight, healthy skin and great hair, grab some foods high in vitamin A. In addition to helping you look good on the outside, vitamin A works wonders on your insides, too – and may even help prevent cancer and heart disease.

SHOPPING LIST: Find vitamin A in carrots, peas, spinach, broccoli, winter squash, sweet potatoes, kale, beet and turnip greens, red peppers, pumpkins and cantaloupes. Check out the dairy section and look for fat-free or low fat milk with added vitamin A. You can also find vitamin A in cheese and eggs.

The Bone Zone

INGREDIENT: Calcium

DIRECTIONS: You need strong bones for a sturdy body and calcium is the key. Calcium builds strong teeth, too!

SHOPPING LIST: Find calcium in fat-free or low fat milk, yogurt and cheese as well as spinach and tofu. Be on the lookout for orange juice with added calcium.

Mighty Mineral

INGREDIENT: Iron

DIRECTIONS: Fuel up with several sources of iron every day. Iron is important when you are young and growing quickly. Iron helps your blood carry oxygen to all of your growing cells.

SHOPPING LIST: Find iron in lean beef, chicken, turkey, fish, pork, eggs, beans, turnip greens, spinach and peas. Whole grain and enriched breads and cereals also have iron.

Body Builder

INGREDIENT: Protein

DIRECTIONS: Protein helps build, maintain and repair your body and muscles, so sink your teeth into some foods high in protein every day.

SHOPPING LIST: Find protein in lean beef, chicken, turkey, fish, pork, eggs and beans as well as fat-free or low fat milk, yogurt and cheese.

Energy Boosters

INGREDIENT: B Vitamins

DIRECTIONS: Boost your body with foods rich in B vitamins. B vitamins help your body release energy from foods you eat.

SHOPPING LIST: Whole grain breads and cereals are important sources of B vitamins.

Find more information on daily nutrition needs at www.mypyramid.gov. Visit www.squaremeals.org or call (888) TEX-KIDS for school meal program details, healthy recipes and more. Square Meals is the Texas Department of Agriculture's school nutrition education and outreach program, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

Three Tips for Parents

1 Get Colorful!

Fruits and vegetables come in a virtual rainbow of colors. Encourage your child to choose from a variety of colorful, fresh fruits and vegetables daily. Fresh fruits and vegetables are packed with vitamins and minerals and do not have added sugars or sodium.

2 Get Fit and Keep it Fun!

Get your child involved in fun physical activities. Put up a basketball hoop in the neighborhood, go jogging or biking together, or get a sandlot game of baseball going. Exercise is always more fun when enjoyed with others.

3 Get Picky – the Right Way!

Food preferences form early, so help your child develop lifelong, healthy habits now. Ask your child to help you pick out fresh produce when you shop. Children are more apt to eat fruits and vegetables they have picked out themselves. Your child can pick from a variety of healthy food at school, and school meals are nutritious, fast, easy and affordable.

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