



HEALTH BITES



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These grants also sponsored the successful 2011 Farmers Market program "Backpacking My Way to a Better Day", which provided new backpacks filled with fresh fruits, vegetables and nutrition information to children of qualifying families.

Questions or Comments?

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Post-Market Blues?

Don't let the end of the Farmers Market be the end of fresh fruits and vegetables on your menu. While we all enjoy being able to shop our outside market for locally grown produce, we know as Michiganders that it isn't a year-round activity. Fortunately, we have access in the colder months to imported fruits and vegetables from neighboring warmer climates. Maybe they don't taste quite the same as the ones you carry home from the Farmers Market on warm, sunny Sundays, but they do help keep your diet balanced and your body stocked with healthy nutrients as you look forward once again to shopping downtown with your friends and neighbors!

Mark your calendar for the 2012 Farmers Market: The market begins Sunday, May 13 and will continue through Sunday, October 21, 2012.

Commit 2 B Fit

Helping your kids become fit and stay healthy isn't always easy. After all, it's hard for them to resist the unhealthy snacks, sodas and fast food that seem to be all around them. It can also be tough to get them away from the television and computers, and find places for them to play and exercise.

Take charge of your health. Make the commitment to increase your physical activity and make healthier nutrition choices. You can find lots of helpful information, tips and resources throughout our website.

Commit 2B Fit® offers a variety of tools and information to help you set goals and track your progress. Check out programs, recipes and more at www.icommit2bfit.org.

Double Up Program Continues

The Fair Food Network has announced that it will continue to match EBT food dollars at the 2012 Farmers Market. This gives EBT recipients DOUBLE dollar amounts to spend on eligible food products at the Farmers Market. Customers who participate in this program get twice the benefit of their EBT funds when they shop the Farmers Market vs. the grocery store.

RECIPES

Mini Lunches

By Sherrie Le Masurier

When trying to come up with a creative idea for child lunch sometimes you have to think small. Kids today are into mini versions of just about everything. Food is no exception.

A normal sized sandwich for instance may offer up little appeal to your child but cut the same sandwich into fingers or bite sized pieces and chances are good it will be gobbled up in no time.

Small size your child's lunch by being creative with each menu item you pack. Just about any idea for child lunch you may have can be made miniature.

For instance, there are baby carrots (which can even be made smaller by slicing in half or in quarters length-wise), mini crackers (such as Ritz bits or gold fish crackers) and tiny spiral sandwiches (made by flattening a slice of bread, spreading on a topping and rolling up, and then slicing into spirals).

Another idea for child lunch includes slicing small things like grapes and cherry tomatoes in half. Or what about cutting things in different shapes like carrot coins instead of carrot sticks? You could also prepare cucumbers in squares instead of rings. (Simply cut off a piece of cucumber, trim the four sides into a square and slice. For even smaller squares, quarter each piece or slice on the diagonal and create triangles).

Take this idea for child lunch one step further and create mini cheese, meat and pickle kabobs.

Mini Kabobs

10 $\frac{1}{2}$ inch cheese cubes (whatever variety your child favors)

10 $\frac{1}{2}$ inch meat cubes (ham, kielbasa, sausage etc.)

2 dill pickles, cut in chunks 10 olives 10 toothpicks

Thread one cheese cube, a chunk of pickle, a piece of meat, and an olive onto each toothpick. Continue using up remaining ingredients.

Try your hand at other mini kabobs using fruits like grapes, strawberries and melons. Or create a mini vegetable kabob featuring cherry tomatoes, mushrooms, peppers, and cucumber.

Pack your child's favorite kabob alongside a fruit or vegetable dip.

Finally, add some fun to your child's tiny lunch by packing a magnifying glass and a note typed in small letters which reads, "I hope you enjoy your mini lunch. Have an awesome day!"

Banana Dog in a Bun

- 1 hot dog bun (whole wheat, if possible)
- 1 tbsp. (15 mL) peanut butter (or cream cheese)
- 1 tbsp. (15 mL) strawberry or other jam (or honey)
- 1 whole banana
- raisins, shredded coconut or chopped peanuts

Spread one inner surface of a split hot dog bun with peanut butter or cream cheese. Spread the other side with jam or honey. Wrap in plastic wrap and place in your child's lunch bag. Also, pack a whole banana (in the peel) and a small container of toppings, such as raisins, coconut, peanuts or whatever else you can think of.

At lunchtime, your child can peel the banana and place it in the bun, sprinkle on the toppings and eat!

This is the coolest lunch ever, not to mention the easiest, and will be the envy of your kids' classmates. If peanut butter is off limits at your child's school, use cream cheese as a spread instead.

How kids can help

Spread peanut butter and jam on bun.
Pack everything into lunch bag and assemble at lunchtime.



After-School Apple Smiles

apple slices peanut butter mini marshmallows

Spread peanut butter on one side of 2 apple slices.
Place marshmallow teeth onto one slice.
Firmly press second slice on top – peanut butter side down.

Enjoy!