



HEALTHY BACK TO SCHOOL RECIPES



MOTIVATION ASSIST
POSITIVE IDEAS ON WEIGHT MANAGEMENT

Author: Jodie Wood

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Introduction

Breakfast time can be hectic meaning we often reach for whatever sugary cereal our kids are screaming for. Similarly putting together packed lunches is often the bane of a tired parents' morning, stumped for ideas that are not only varied but healthy too. A few minutes prep even the evening before can make life a lot easier for parents in the morning and ensure kids are provided with a nutritious AND delicious breakfast to set them up for the day followed by a lunch to keep them focused in class.

A meal that is well balanced with adequate protein and a low GI source of carbohydrate is vital to helping kids last from one meal to the next without lulls in energy and concentration. Hypoglycaemia can occur when blood glucose (sugar) levels drop and affects both adults and children alike.

When your child's blood sugar level drops too low, their brain cells and muscles do not have enough energy to function at full capacity. Glucose is also important for helping your child's brain grow normally. When children ingest a meal that is based on refined sugars instead of slow releasing low GI carbohydrates this causes spikes and rapid drops in blood sugar levels. Ever noticed your child saying they're hungry and getting agitated, anxious, weak or complaining of headaches or nausea? These are all symptoms of hypoglycaemia and can seriously affect them in the classroom. The key to preventing this condition setting in is to provide them with meals that slow release energy and provide a good source of protein to keep them feeling fuller for longer.

The menu suggestions in this pack all fit the bill with great low GI carbohydrate options and protein sources from both animal and plant-based foods. The inclusion of avocados, seeds and super berries also provide kids with Omega 3 fatty acids vital for brain development, antioxidants and immune boosting vitamins and minerals.

Always choose wholegrain when shopping for bread, pitas, wraps and bagels as they contain less sugar and will slow release energy. Similarly avoid cereals and yoghurts that are laden with extra sugar, look for low sugar products that contain less than 5g of sugar per 100g.

Sectioned lunch boxes similar to those pictured below are a great option for keeping lunches fresh and mean you can securely include dips and loose fruits such as grapes and berries too. Don't forget to send your little person off with a water bottle, try avoid sugary fruit juices and opt for sugar free cordials instead if they won't drink plain water.

Healthy Back to School Menu Suggestions



Monday

Breakfast: Boiled Eggs with Wholegrain Soldiers

Boil eggs as per preference and toast some rye, spelt or whole grain bread. These breads are all lower in sugar than traditional refined white sliced pan and hence release energy in a slow and steady manor following breakfast. The eggs provide protein that is not only important for growth but will keep kids feeling full for longer than a carbohydrate will.

School Lunch: Veggie Falafel Pita, fruit of choice, chocolate power ball

Slightly toast a wholegrain pitta bread and spread some hummus, tzatziki or pesto inside, whichever your kids prefer. Next add some roasted red peppers, these can be bought ready to serve in jars from most supermarkets as can the falafel. Crumble in the falafel and add some salad leaves. Include a piece of fresh fruit in their lunch box and a small homemade chocolate power ball, see the recipe attached.



Tuesday

Breakfast: Power Porridge

If your children are tired of bland porridge it's time to mix it up. Cook the oats as normal and portion into bowls. Next add a teaspoon of almond or peanut butter, ½ tsp of cacao power, ½ tsp of honey and top with seasonal fruit such as berries and some chopped nuts or seeds of choice - I like toasted almonds or pecans. Serve drizzled with almond milk. Look for "steel cut" or "raw" oats when shopping for porridge as we want to opt for products that are as little refined as possible. Nut butters are a great source of protein, healthy fats vitamins and minerals and add a comforting layer to this breakfast.

Lunch: Turkey bagel, red apple, small seed bar

When buying bagels look for wholegrain Bagel Thins, a more lunch box appropriate size that won't send anyone into a carbohydrate coma. Spread some low-fat cream cheese on one half and layer with sliced turkey, a great source of lean protein. Add veggies of choice such as tomato, cucumber or spinach leaves, whatever you know your child likes. Include a piece of fruit in their lunch box and a homemade seed bar too.



Wednesday

Breakfast: Homemade granola with natural yoghurt

Store bought granola and cereals are usually loaded with sugar despite the fact they are often marketed as the healthy option. Homemade granola is super easy and fun to do-see recipe attached. Serve as a cereal with milk or topped with low fat no added sugar Greek yoghurt and some fresh fruit.

Lunch: Spelt bread sandwich, chocolate power ball, piece of fruit.

Spelt bread is low in sugar, low in gluten and a great source of fibre. Spelt breads are now widely available in supermarkets and are a great option for kids who won't eat wholegrain breads as it sits in between white and brown bread. Try avoiding overly processed deli meats such as sliced ham and opt for lean options with more nutritional value. If you roast a chicken for dinner during the week keep some of the meat for sandwich making. Chicken, a light mayonnaise and some salad of choice makes an easy and well-balanced filling when paired with spelt bread. Include a power ball and piece of fruit in their lunch box too.



Thursday

Breakfast; Power smoothie

Smoothies are not only quick and easy to make, they are a great opportunity to pack fruit and vegetables into a meal for your kids without them knowing. As a general rule you can use any fruit you like, frozen fruit is a great option as it's not only inexpensive but makes the smoothie cold and nicer to drink. They are also a great chance to add any super powders you may be interested in your kids trying. For example, cacao powder, the purest form of chocolate you can consume (not to be confused with cocoa powder we use to make hot chocolate) contains the highest concentration of antioxidants of any food. It's also a great source of magnesium which contributes to a reduction of tiredness and fatigue, electrolyte balance and normal functioning of the nervous system. See the easy smoothie recipes attached.

Lunch: Bread sticks, crudités, hummus, yoghurt, chewy seed bar, piece of fruit.

Not every lunch has to be sandwich based, why not try sending your little one off with some crackers, breadsticks, crudités and hummus or cream cheese to dip into? Hummus is made of chickpeas which is a great source of plant-based protein. You could also add a small piece of cheese or a low sugar yoghurt to their lunch box as an added source of protein and calcium. Include a seed bar and piece of fruit for them to snack on too.



Friday

Breakfast: Banana pancakes

Banana pancakes are ready to serve in under ten minutes. Gluten free and a great source of potassium which helps control the body's electrolyte balance and is crucial to heart function, skeletal and smooth muscle contraction. The eggs in the recipe also provide a good source of protein.

Lunch: Chicken and avocado wrap, chocolate power ball and yoghurt.

Choose a whole grain wrap and spread a little pesto and mayonnaise over it before layering some chicken, sliced avocado and salad. Include grated mozzarella in the wrap too if you'd like to add extra protein. Add a small low sugar yoghurt with some fresh berries and with a chocolate power ball to their lunch box for snack time.

Healthy Back to School Recipes



Chocolate Power Balls

Ingredients

- 100g steel cut oats
- 2 tbsp unsweetened peanut butter
- 6 squares of dark chocolate
- 1 tsp cacao powder
- 1 ½ tbsp raw honey
- 2 tbsp melted coconut oil
- 4 tsp desiccated coconut or finely chopped nuts

Directions

1. Blend all of the ingredients except the coconut in a food processor until smooth, if the mix is too stiff add a drop more oil, too wet add more oats.
2. Place the mix in the fridge to cool for ten minutes before rolling small balls and dusting with coconut flakes or chopped nuts! Makes 10 balls.
3. These will keep for 3 days in the fridge.



Chewy Seed Bars

Packed full of nutrients your little ones will feel as if they're getting a treat rather than a powerhouse of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. Adults and children love these bars alike!

Dry ingredients

- 1 cup pumpkin seeds
- 1 cup dried shredded coconut
- ½ cup sesame seeds
- ½ cup sunflower seeds
- 4 tbs chia seeds
- 2 tbsp bee pollen (optional)

Wet ingredients

- 20 pitted dates, soak in some warm water for 10mins before use
- 6 tbsp coconut oil, room temperature
- 4 tbsp raw cacao powder
- 1 whole vanilla bean, cut into pieces (including the pod) or 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Add after blending

- 6 tbsp rolled oats
- 2 tbsp poppy or chia seeds

Directions

1. Place the dry ingredients (leaving out the oats and chia seeds) into a food processor and blitz until roughly chopped, you want the mixture to still have a crunch. Set aside in a bowl.
2. Add half of the dates and the rest of the wet ingredients to the food processor. Run the processor for 30 seconds, then add the rest of the dates one at a time while the machine is running until the mixture is smooth. If the mix is getting stuck unplug stir around a few times with a fork or add a dash of water. Continue to blend until smooth.
3. Combine the wet ingredients with the dry and add in the oats and seeds. Get your kids involved at this stage and ask them to mash the mix together with their hands.
4. Press the mixture evenly into a 11 x 7-inch baking dish, make sure it becomes quite compact. Place in the fridge for about 30 minutes. Cut into bars. Wrap them in paper and store in the fridge in an air-tight container.

My tip is to freeze them and put into lunch boxes straight from the freezer so they hold their shape.



Homemade Granola

Ingredients

- 6 cups old-fashioned, rolled oats
- ¼ cup raw honey
- Juice of one large orange juice
- ½ teaspoon orange zest
- 1 cup chopped almonds
- 1 cup chopped walnuts
- 1 cup chopped pecans
- 2 tsp cinnamon
- ¾ cup coconut oil
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp salt

Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 150°C. Line 3 baking sheets with parchment paper.
2. Combine all ingredients in a large mixing bowl and mix thoroughly to ensure even baking.
3. Spread the granola on the sheets to create a thin layer. Bake for 30 minutes occasionally rotating the baking sheets to avoid burning.
4. Remove from the oven when golden brown and let cool for ten minutes. Add any optional toppings such as coconut flakes or dried fruits and break up with your hands. Store the mixture in a large container with a sealed lid.

As a rough guide, 30g of granola is a perfect serving size per child.



Power Smoothie - Super Berry Smoothie

Ingredients

- Handful of frozen mixed berries
- 1 banana
- 2 tbsp low fat no added sugar natural Greek yoghurt
- 200ml fresh orange juice
- 1 tsp flax seeds

Directions

Simply blend all of the ingredients in a Nutri Bullet, food processor or kitchen blender and serve immediately. The flax seeds in this recipe are a great source of omega 3 fatty acids.

This recipe will make two glasses of smoothies.



Power Smoothie - Wild Monkey Smoothie

Ingredients

- 1 large banana (sliced, frozen)
- 1 tsp cocoa powder (unsweetened)
- 170g low sugar Greek Yogurt
- 250ml of almond milk
- 1 tsp honey, maple syrup, or agave
- 1 tbsp peanut butter

Directions

Simply blend all of the ingredients in a Nutri Bullet, food processor or kitchen blender and serve immediately. To make this recipe dairy free simply swap the Greek yoghurt for coconut yoghurt, widely available in supermarkets.

This recipe will made two glasses of smoothies.



Banana Pancakes

Ingredients

- 2 mashed bananas
- 4 eggs
- ½ tsp. vanilla essence
- ½ tsp. cinnamon

Toppings

- Berries
- Lemon juice
- Stevia

Directions

1. Mash your banana with a fork. In another bowl whisk the eggs. Mix the eggs and banana together, add ½ tsp of vanilla essence and the cinnamon if desired.
2. Spray a pan with low calorie cooking spray on a low-medium heat. Add a two euro sized amount of batter to the pan, let it set for 30 seconds or until the centre bubbles and then flip it.

Top Tip: Banana pancakes can be awkward to flip and can quite often end up looking like a scrambled mess. If you would like to make one larger pan sized pancake pour one quarter of the mixture into the pan on a very low heat. Cook for 2-3mins and/ or when it starts to bubble on top take the pan off the hob and finish it off under the grill for 1 minute on a low heat. Your pancake should slide off the pan and onto your plate. Enjoy these pancakes on their own or with some fresh berries.

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1850 306000

info@motivation.ie



It's not just *what* you eat, it's *why*