Back to school and time to pack healthy lunches for your family

September means back to school! Healthy lunches are an important part of the day for your family. Eating a healthy lunch gives you energy to work or study during the afternoon and helps to give your brain a boost. A healthy lunch should contain vegetables, fruit, whole grains and lean protein.

Add vegetables to lunch by including cherry tomatoes, baby carrots, sliced bell peppers or sliced cucumbers with a little of your favorite salad dressing or hummus. Try adding lettuce and tomato to sandwiches or enjoying vegetable soup.

Fresh, canned in its’ own juice, frozen or dried, all fruit is portable and adds a little sweetness to your meal.

Whole grains give your brain an energy boost. Whole wheat bread, pitas or tortillas work great for sandwiches. Try whole grain crackers with soup, light popcorn for crunch or whole grain pasta for pasta salads.

Lean protein comes in many forms. Try legumes like black beans, kidney beans or chick peas, hummus, nut butters, nuts, sunflower seeds, refried beans, tuna and other fish or seafood and eggs. Many of these lean protein sources may be less expensive than deli meats, so try something new with your family.

Don’t forget water or low fat milk!

In Season: Fruits and Vegetables Galore

September is a bountiful month at the farmers’ market and produce is plentiful. New this month: Brussels sprouts, kale, grapes and watermelon. You will also find apples, peaches, pears, plums, green and yellow beans, beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, collard greens, corn, cucumbers, herbs, onions, peppers, potatoes, Swiss chard, summer squashes and tomatoes.
It’s back to school time and kids come home from school ready for a snack! With your help, let your kids make this healthy snack. It’s apple season and apples and peanut butter are always a hit!

**Peanut Butter Yogurt Dip**

_Serves: 8_  
_Serving size: 1/8th of the recipe_

**Ingredients:**
- 1 cup non fat plain yogurt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 3/4 cup reduced fat peanut butter
- Fruit of your choice, cut into pieces or slices for dipping

**Directions:**
1. Combine yogurt, vanilla and peanut butter in a bowl and mix well.
2. Keep in a covered container and refrigerate until ready for use.

Recipe from Cornell University Cooperative Extension - New York City Nutrition & Health Programs Recipe Collection.

**Nutrition Facts:** (dip only) Serving Size: 1/8th of the recipe, 160 calories, 80 calories from fat, 9g total fat, 50% calories from fat, 2g saturated fat, 0g trans fat, 0mg cholesterol, 160mg sodium, 14g total carbohydrate, 2g dietary fiber, 5g sugars, 7g protein, 2% vitamin A, 4% calcium, 2% vitamin C, 4% Iron.

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