

WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for August 22, 2022
Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, & Healthy Relationships we'll talk about packing a successful lunch, and as always look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

This is an exciting week for many families across our county. Back to School! The supply lists may be all checked off, but have you thought about what is going in that insulated lunch bag?

Last Monday Cindy Hilbish, the Health Educator with the Coshocton County Health Department, and I had the opportunity to talk with high school volleyball players about sports nutrition. It was a good reminder that some kids and youth know the basics when it comes to healthy choices. However, they still need lots of guidance and our help in purchasing healthy choices for them to start with.

There are four components of a successful packed lunch this school year:

Balanced nutrition: Getting some protein, carbohydrates, and healthier fats all incorporated into one lunch bag can be a challenge, but it is not impossible. Think about the MyPlate model with a plate divided into 4 parts. Half the plate should be fruits and vegetables, so aim to send about half the lunch with fruit and veggie options. Ohio State Wexner Medical Center dietitians suggest baby carrots and pepper slices with ranch dressing. Pack a piece of fruit like mandarin oranges or apples for older youth. Kids may be more likely to eat fruit that is cut into bite-sized pieces. If the fruit comes back uneaten in whole form, cut it up and put it in a container.

The other half the lunch should be protein and grains. Rather than peanut butter and jelly on white bread every day until May, encourage some alternate proteins. Leftover baked chicken, thinly sliced, on a whole grain tortilla, with a slice of cheese and some light mayo or mashed avocado.

Food Safe: Be sure to include a frozen ice pack anytime you are packing refrigerated items like cut fruit or meat. Keep these things in the refrigerator until right before your child heads out the door. If you are sending hot soup, be sure it is in a thermos designed to hold hot beverages. And don't forget to clean out the bag after school with soap and water and allow it to dry well before the next morning.

Low Waste: OSU Extension has a one-page information sheet with suggestions for packing a low waste lunch. Start with a reusable lunch box or bag. Pack reusable utensils. If you have concerns about your best, matching flatware making it back home, consider purchasing a less expensive stainless steel set to use for lunches or pick up mix and match items from a thrift store. Avoid plastic baggies, plastic wrap, and aluminum foil. Use food storage containers made of cloth, durable plastic, glass, or stainless steel that can be re-used. Use glass or ceramic containers to heat food items when a microwave is available.

Try to limit single-serving drink boxes, pouches, cans, and bottles. Filtered water in a reusable bottle is the healthiest and least expensive option.

Fun: One way to make lunch enjoyable is to get kids involved in packing. Allowing them to help make the food choices is one way to ensure they will be more likely to eat what they pack. Occasionally include a small treat that your child enjoys. You could also include a small note or a joke for them to read to friends.

One more thing to keep in mind is that packing lunch is not just for kids. Adults can save a tremendous amount of money each year by packing leftovers rather than eating out at work. It also gives you a better opportunity to create a balanced meal.

And now let's look at some upcoming programs from OSU Extension.

There is still time to catch a "Savoring Ohio Produce" webinar this summer. The next online class is tomorrow, August 23 from 4-5 PM. Kate Shumaker and I will be teaching all about Melons. Visit our website to register or watch recorded webinars anytime. And can you believe that the Coshocton County Fair starts in only 39 days!

Be sure to check out our latest newsletter on our website Coshocton.osu.edu. Click on Family and Consumer Sciences and then "News and Events." You can also subscribe there so that it will be sent via email each month. You can find details about future programs related to financial wellness, food safety, and more at our website coshocton.osu.edu.

In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help educate and improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at coshocton.osu.edu. Make it a healthy day!