

## **Your Child's Lunchbox!**

What to pack in your child's lunchbox? This is a familiar problem for parents, and one that we in the health office hear is a common concern among families.

So to help with meal planning, here are a few things to keep in mind:

- 1) Protein is key to helping kids concentrate for the long periods of time required of them in school. Some good ideas for protein sources are hummus, edamame, beef or turkey jerky, lean lunchmeat, tofu, cheese, cottage cheese, boiled eggs.
- 2) Fruits and vegetables should make up the bulk of their lunch after protein. Provides fiber and rich nutrients that are needed for brain power.
- 3) Keep carbohydrates to a minimum, but be sure to include some. Carbs are needed for energy, but keeping them low will help avoid the "crash" that happens after they have eaten a large amount of carbohydrates such as crackers, goldfish, pasta, and bread.
- 4) Finally, sugar really has no place at school, except as the occasional treat. Sugar is not included in the new food guidelines put out by the USDA (see the new Choose My Plate guidelines at [usda.gov](http://usda.gov)) as it is not considered a food group, but a special treat intended for the occasional indulgence. It is not meant for the daily supplementation of your child's diet.

Poor nutrition during the day has been shown to decrease focus, increase hyperactivity issues, decrease information retention, and increase irritability in students. In an effort to give your child the best opportunity in school, pack them a lunchbox high in protein, fruits and vegetables, minimal in carbs, and absent in sugar.

Feel free to contact me with any questions. I am always happy to help.

**Cammi Bell, RN, MS**  
**School Nurse, Kentfield School District**