Get Up & Move!

Family Activity

Series 2: March

Healthy Picnic Ideas

Many children have their spring breaks during the month of March, which means that it can be a great time to spend doing activities as a family. Even if your family does not plan a vacation over spring break, there are many fun activities to be done locally. This month you and your family can walk to a park or beach and pack a picnic. This activity encourages being physically active, but also allows you and your family to enjoy a healthy meal together outdoors.

Once you and your family have decided on the location for your picnic, you can begin planning what foods you are going to bring. You will need a picnic basket or a cooler for your picnic food. You should also pack a large blanket or tablecloth to sit on while you eat. Consider using reusable plates and utensils in order to be more environmentally conscious.

When preparing a picnic, remember to pack foods that will not spoil. Some ideas include:

- Cut up vegetables
- Baked whole grain tortilla chips and salsa
- Dried fruit or trail mix
- Celery sticks and nut butter
- Sandwiches or wraps filled with lean protein and vegetables (Try using whole wheat bread and wraps)
- Fruit salad
- Trail mix
- Oatmeal cookies or fig bars
- Water, iced tea or any other sugar-free beverage

It is important to keep your picnic food safe to prevent food borne illness. Eating outdoors limits the access to food safety features found in kitchens. Here are some tips to help you keep your picnic food safe.

- When going on a picnic or camping, research your destination to make sure there is a source of clean water. You can also pack disposable wipes or antibacterial hand sanitizer.
- Bacteria prefer foods high in protein and moisture. These foods include milk products, poultry, eggs, meats, fish, mayonnaise, and salad dressings. Be extra careful with these foods or do not pack them.
- Pack foods in separate containers to prevent cross contamination. Pack meats at the bottom of a cooler to prevent juices from dripping onto other foods.
- Be sure to keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold until you are ready to eat them.
- Serve food quickly and return food to a cooler within one hour. Throw away all food that has been outside of the cooler for more than one hour.
- Keep food covered whenever possible to protect it from insects and other animals.
Wash fruits and vegetables carefully in clean water to get rid of any bacteria. Come prepared for physical activities. Here is a list of things that you might want to bring on your picnic:

- Bubble liquid and wands
- Butterfly net
- Sand pails and shovels
- Sidewalk chalk
- Beach, soccer, baseball or basket ball
- Frisbee
- Bat, ball and glove to play baseball or softball

A family picnic is a great way to spend more time together being active outdoors. Remember to record the minutes you spend being physically active at your picnic in your March calendar. These minutes will contribute to your daily goal of 60 minutes of physical activity.

Source:  (www.kidsturncentral.com; www.truestarhealth.com )