

West Virginia WIC's "Learning for Health" Project

Lesson #9

Power Lunches in a Snap!

The goal of this session is to promote fast, healthy lunch food choices for children and adults. This includes ideas for packing lunches and eating at home/daycare.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, parents/caregivers will be able to:

1. Share what a typical lunch is like in their family (may be different for child and adult).
2. Identify one reason why a well-rounded lunch is important to children and adults.
3. Choose at least one power lunch idea they will try within the next two days.

Materials

- Lesson Plan Posters (2)
- Copies of Parent Fact Sheet (1 two-sided sheet)
- Easel, flip chart and colorful markers
- Supplies to share one easy recipe to make with children and/or parents, if desired.
- Pencils and/or pens for adults to write if they wish.

Preparation

- Set up room in an informal way - chairs in a semi-circle if possible.
- Hang up the posters so all the group participants can see them easily OR you can attached the posters to an easel and show them at the appropriate time.

Introduction

- Introduce yourself and welcome everyone.
- Explain the purpose of the group and the estimated time.
- Have group members introduce themselves. Have them share where they and their children usually have lunch (this will help you tailor the ideas and suggestions).

Discussion Questions

Select your questions from the following list. Depending on the size of your group, you might plan to ask 2-3 questions to engage the group members and foster discussion.

Start the discussion by commenting or summarizing what the group participants have shared about their lunchtime routines. This may be something like - *It sounds like many of you make lunches at home but many of you also eat lunch at work and your children eat at day care or nursery school*.

Whether you have lunch at home with you child or you pack your lunches for daycare and work, there are ways to make it easy!

When you pack a lunch with power foods you and your child will have the energy to play and work through the afternoon and do your very best.

What kinds of foods do you usually have for lunch?

List responses on the flipchart. You can have the group comment on the overall quality of the lunch foods. Through this discussion, circle the foods that the group members think are of "high nutrition value". You will need to discuss the definition of high nutrition value - high Vitamin C, A, fiber, calcium, and lower fat, saturated fat, simple sugars, calories.

What kinds of easy ideas can you share/think of to make these lunches more "powerful" (nutritious)?

Foster group discussion of ideas. Share some of the ideas on the posters/fact sheets, if appropriate.

POWER LUNCH IDEAS

Go for variety

1. Offer or pack milk, a small container of low-fat yogurt, or a few slices of cheese with crackers. Try a grilled cheese sandwich with a bowl of tomato soup for an easy Saturday lunch.
2. Offer or pack a vegetable - carrot sticks, broccoli or slices of pepper with a little ranch dressing for dipping, a tuna or cheese sandwich with thin slices of tomato or lettuce.
3. Offer or pack a fruit to top off your meal - orange slices, grapes (cut in half for children) a banana, or any fresh fruit in season. Canned fruit like peaches, pineapple and applesauce are great treats.

4. Mix up your sandwiches by putting your tuna, turkey or peanut butter on a bagel or in a pita pocket for a change of pace.
5. Leftovers from last night's dinner are great for lunch the next day. Make sure to heat the leftovers well in the microwave and test the temperature before you serve them to your child.

What kinds of things can you do if your child is in day care or nursery school during lunch? If you don't pack their lunch, how can you make sure they are getting a Power Lunch?

If your child has lunch served to them at day care, talk to your child's day care provider about what kinds of foods are served each day. Ask how often fruits, vegetables and milk are served at lunch and snacks. This will make it easier for you to know how to plan your child's other meals and snacks at home.

Evaluation/Wrap-up

- Here is something that you might be interested in (hold up copy of the fact sheet if not passed out already). It includes many of the things we talked about today.
- Who would like one? (pass out to interested participants)
- Many of the ideas that you shared today are on the Fact Sheet plus a few more ideas for you.
- What is one new lunch idea you can try in the next few days?
- Thank them for coming to the group and participating. Let them know that they can call you or stop by for more information whenever they wish.

Resources

Pretend Soup and Other Real Recipes by Mollie Katzen. Published by Tricycle Press in Berkeley, CA. This cookbook has easy recipes for children to make with step-by-step pictures for preparing the recipes.

The New American Diet by Sonja and William O'Conner. Published by Simon & Schuster in New York.