

* Our 100th Issue!

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medicine

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Gardens Grow on Kids

Move over reading, writing, and 'rithmetic. In-school garden tending, a new trend in schools, significantly increases fruit and vegetable consumption among students. A new study published by the American Dietetic Association shows that kids whose curriculum includes getting down and dirty in a school garden—planting, weeding, and harvesting—eat more fruits, vegetables, fiber, and vitamins A and C than their peers who receive more traditional nutrition education.

If your child's school doesn't yet have a garden-tending program, you can download the Center for Ecoliteracy's *Guide to Starting School Gardens* at www.ecoliteracy.org. In the meantime, give your children a garden of their own at home. Grab their attention and foster their devotion by employing a few suggestions from the National Gardening Association: Let children help



choose what they plant, make sure to include easy-to-grow plants, and don't sweat the crooked rows ... remember, you're "growing" healthy eating habits that will last a lifetime. —Candace Walsh



healthy pantry

Back to School: Time-Saving Tips That Make the Grade

Start your child's school year off happy and healthy with these meal and snack ideas from Chicago-based dietitian Dawn Jackson Blatner, RD.

- 1. Avoid A.M. Altercations.** Swap out at least half of your child's favorite sugary cereal with a whole-grain, high-fiber choice for a heart-wise compromise.
- 2. Bag a Breakfast.** If a sit-down breakfast isn't an option, mix a whole-grain cereal, almonds (or another nut), and dried fruit in a resealable bag.
- 3. Create a Lunch-Bag Checklist.** Include one whole grain, a lean protein (peanut butter counts!), one fruit, one vegetable, and a dairy or nondairy alternative.
- 4. Contain Yourself.** Make lunch at a moment's notice by creating a lunchbox tray in the fridge packed with typical ingredients, like bread, lettuce, and cheese. Pull it out in one easy motion, and bypass the time-consuming gathering process.
- 5. Approve After-School Snacks.** Kids like choices, so stock your kitchen with two or three acceptable options. Try "pizza popcorn"—130-calorie popcorn packs sprinkled with oregano and Parmesan cheese. —LG



IT'S OFFICIAL ... Pop Makes Your Teens Snap

Teens who drink one or more glasses of soda a day have higher rates of mental distress, behavior problems, hyperactivity, depression, anxiety, and lethargy, according to a recent Norwegian study published in the *American Journal of Public Health*.

Sugar's main offender here. The slump that comes after a sugar high, aka "reactive hypoglycemia," is characterized by lethargy, depression, and anxiety—and kids are affected accordingly. Serotonin, a neurotransmitter linked to the regulation of mood, is also thrown off by the blood-sugar roller coaster that soda kicks into gear. Sorry, but diet soda is not the solution—despite industry claims, sugar substitutes such as aspartame, saccharine, and sucralose have not been proven safe in any long-term studies.

Kids who drink a lot of soda also eat less, trading nutrient-dense calories for empty ones. Put juice mixed with sparkling water and herbal iced teas on the table instead. —CW