HEALTHY SUMMER FUN

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As the school year ends and summer approaches many children will have to prepare lunch and snacks for themselves. When they go to the refrigerator what will they find? Will it be healthy foods or junk food? As parents, it is up to us to make sure our kids eat right even when we are not around. So how do we make sure our children eating healthy? By packing the fridge with fresh fruits and vegetables. Kids like foods that are easy and available to grab, so it is best to have healthy options prepared in advance. Kids also like anything that they can dip: carrots, celery, broccoli, and cucumbers are more likely to disappear if they have some low fat ranch dressing to dip them in. Vanilla yogurt also makes a good dip for fruits. For those of you that have picky eaters encourage them to eat healthy snacks by allowing them to help make easy recipes. Children who make their snacks are more willing to try them. Here are a few recipes that are healthy and easy for your little ones to make.

**Fruit Smoothie**

**Ingredients:**
- Fresh or frozen (thawed) fruit (1 cup per serving)
- Yogurt (1/4 cup per serving)
- Low-fat milk (1/4 cup per serving)

**Supplies:**
- Bowls for fruit
- Paper or plastic cups for smoothie
- Forks
- Whisks if available

Choose fruit and mash in bottom of cup. Add yogurt and milk and whip with whisk or fork.

*NOTE: If prepared ahead, a blender is recommended*
**Yogurt Sundae**

**Ingredients:**
- Whole grain breakfast cereal that is crunchy
- Fat-free or low-fat yogurt
- Variety of cut-up or small fresh fruit (grapes, berries, sliced peaches, etc.) and/or canned and drained fruits

**Supplies:**
- Bowls and serving spoons for cereal and fruit
- Clear plastic cup for each person

Put yogurt into cups (about 1/4 to 1/2 cup per person). Each person can then add cereal and fruit to their sundaes.

**Fruit Kabobs**

**Ingredients:**
- Strawberries, grapes, unsweetened pineapple chunks, bananas

**Supplies:**
- Toothpicks
- Bowls for fruit
- Paper plates

Clean and cut strawberries and grapes. Drain canned, unsweetened pineapple chunks (save the juice). Slice bananas 1/2-inch thick. Dip in pineapple juice to prevent browning. Assemble any combination of fruits on toothpicks and eat.

**Frozen Fruit**

**Ingredients:**
- Variety of fruits such as grapes, blueberries, strawberries that have been frozen
- Sliced bananas, peaches, or other fruits that have been placed on plastic wrap and frozen
- Ice cubes made with fruit juice and frozen onto a stick; it’s OK if the cubes contain small bites of fruit, such as berries or crushed pineapple. Prepare ahead of time, and keep cold until served.

These recipes are quick and easy for children of all ages. Children are sure to eat foods they make because they take pride in creating it, which will boost their confidence. By increasing fruit and vegetable servings children are less likely to have childhood obesity and other serious healthy problems in life. For more healthy recipes you can visit www.efnep.com.

For more information on how to start Expanded Food and Nutrition classes in your school, church, or community, please contact Tamika McLean, 4-H Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program Assistant with North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Robeson County Center, at 671-3276, by E-mail at Tamika_McLean@ncsu.edu or visit our website at http://robeson.ces.ncsu.edu.