

Family Living

The Portland Observer

Meals That Make The Grade

Mealtime Tips Help Families Earn Top Marks for National Nutrition Month

March is National Nutrition Month and the National Pork Producers Council (NPPC) is offering families across America nutritious solutions to their most common mealtime dilemmas.

"Preparing healthier meals doesn't mean giving up flavor or convenience," says Karen Kalsem, manager of youth communications for the Pork Information Bureau (PIB) of the NPPC. "There are many great-tasting recipes that are low in fat, require no more than six ingredients and take less than 30 minutes to make."

Kalsem recommends starting the healthy shape-up with flavors families already love. Family favorites like pork chops take on a new taste with low-fat toppings such as applesauce, barbecue sauce or salsa. For example, combine chunky applesauce with cinnamon red hots for Apple Cinnamon Chops. Kids will like the taste, and parents will appreciate a hearty meal with just 8 grams of fat per serving.

Food For Thought

Parents have many challenges when it comes to feeding -- and pleasing -- an entire family, including finding foods to appeal to their kids' tastes.

Here are three top parent concerns about nutrition and some simple ideas to address them:

How can I cut excess fat in my family's meals?

Choose Low-fat Cooking Methods -- Eliminate extra fat in meals by using a cooking method that requires little or no added fats like stir-frying, roasting or broiling foods.

Look for Lean Meats -- Learn what to look for in the meat case at your supermarket or grocery store. For example, select the leanest cuts of pork available by looking for the word "loin" on the label (i.e. pork tenderloin, center loin chops, sirloin roasts).

Add Flavor, Not Fat -- Give your recipes some zest by flavoring dishes with herbs and spices. Invite your children to grow their own herb garden to contribute to family meals.

How can I get my kids to eat more fruits and vegetables?

Spread with Savvy -- Instead of using butter or margarine on dinner rolls, serve nonfat fruit spreads, such as apple butter or cranberry relish to complement a healthy and delicious meal.

Dip Your Dessert -- Fresh fruits make a fun and delicious dessert when dipped in a mixture of reduced-fat whipped topping and low-fat fruit yogurt.

Play With Your Food -- give your kids permission to play with fresh fruits and vegetables to create kid-friendly side dishes. Experiment with ants on a log (celery sticks spread with peanut butter and topped with raisins) or grape caterpillars (green grapes strung on a toothpick).

How can I get my kids to try a greater variety of foods?

Kid-Friendly Shapes and Sizes -- Kids love to eat foods that are cut into fun and manageable shapes and sizes. For a tasty change of pace, serve kabobs made with pork cubes or thread skewers with fruit for a colorful dessert.

Go For The Great 8 -- If your kids like pork chops, they will enjoy the Great 8 cuts of pork, which offer the same great taste. All of these cuts -- from tenderloin to sirloin roast -- fall between a skinless chicken breast and thigh in terms of fat content.

Hands-On helpers -- One of the best ways to get kids interested in trying new foods is to get them involved. They are much more likely to eat something they helped prepare. Let them mix ingredients, sample spices and taste test along the way.

Award Winning Program Brings Message Of Safety

Unintentional injuries are the leading cause of death in the United States among children.

According to statistics, each year approximately 7,200 children ages 14 and under are killed and 50,000 children are injured seriously enough to require medical treatment. Many of these deaths and thousands of injuries are preventable when children are taught basic emergency procedures and personal safety skills.

In keeping with its commitment to child health and safety, the Northwest Osteopathic Medical Foundation will hold its eleventh annual Kid Safe program for children ages five to 12, on Saturday, March 8. This free public program, which expects to reach more than 1,000 children and their families, will be held for 9:00am to 2:00pm at two sites: Lent Elementary School, 5105 SE 97th, Portland, and John Wetten Elementary School, 645 Chicago Ave., Gladstone.

Kid Safe offers hands-on training for children in CPR, First Aid,



The Kid Safe program helps children ages five to twelve learn personal safety skills.

Electrical Safety, Fire Safety, Bike & Traffic Safety, Calling 911, Stranger Danger, Poison Prevention, Personal Safety, Baby-sitting, Drug and Alcohol Awareness, and Disaster Preparedness. In addition, children may obtain their own regulation fingerprints and ID photos, tour emergency vehicles, visit a "Little Hospital" setting and take home a "Trail Guide to Safety." Taught by qualified healthcare professionals and public safety officials, Kid Safe offers children the opportunity to interact with these individuals from who they may one day need assistance.

A program of the National Child Safety Council, Kid Safe is offered in the greater Portland metropolitan area as a public service of the Northwest Osteopathic Medical Foundation. Through the years, more than 5,500 metro children have participated in this program. Parents must pre-register their children by calling 699-5366. Children under ten must be accompanied by an adult.

A Model Of Courage And Faith

BY MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN

When Martha Watford's husband was killed, she didn't know how she'd support herself and her four children. But through her faith in God and her fighting spirit, she gathered up the courage to make a good life for her family, and in the process has helped thousands of children get a head start in life.

"Our marriage was a real partnership, and he was the real breadwinner until he was shot and killed in a senseless act of random violence," says Martha, director of La Peninsula Head Start in the South Bronx, N.Y. "We shared in every aspect of marriage, including the housework and nurturing of the children. When he was taken from us, I was lost. I was not prepared to become the sole breadwinner of the family. I knew I had to take control of our lives or my children would suffer greatly, and I asked God for strength and guidance and began to

think seriously about what to do."

That guidance came in the form of advice from members of the board of La Peninsula Head Start program. "They encouraged me to apply for the job of Head Start director when the position became available," says Martha, who was a teaching assistant with the New York public schools system at the time and had served as chairwoman of the Parents Advisory Committee for two years.

She was hesitant to accept the challenge at first, but she remembered the opportunities it provided for her own children. So she took what she thought would be a one-year leave of absence from her teaching assistant job and opened her first Head Start program with 30 children in the basement of a church. In the 30 years since then, Martha has been the director and her Head Start programs have served more than 15,000 children, many of who visit from time to time to thank her for

the difference Head Start made in their lives.

"Many of us can say that we honestly don't know where we'd be without Head Start," she says. "The Head Start family surrounded me and gave me the inner-strength to know what I had to do to keep my family together. Their support gave me what I needed to feel good about myself, to go back to school, and to realize what my calling was. It also helped my children academically. Head Start is important for children and families, because it gives people the opportunity to become self-sufficient, and it concentrates on self-esteem."

Today, Martha runs five Head Start programs in the south Bronx, which serve more than 750 children and families. "Unfortunately," she says, "we are only serving 30 to 40 percent of those eligible for Head Start, because of limited funding. That is especially sad when you consider the number of single-parent-

headed households in areas like the South Bronx. There are many poor children and families whose lives would be turned around if Head Start were available."

Nationally, the numbers are no better. Last year, only about a third of the eligible children were served by Head Start despite the federally funded program's extraordinary 25-year record of successfully preparing poor children for school.

The good news, though, is that Martha's important work has not gone unnoticed. Last year the federal government awarded her a grant that will allow her to extend her program to 51 additional children. Also, the Robin Hood Foundation in New York City gave Martha a "heroes" award this year. And the White House invited Martha to Washington, D.C. to witness the signing of the Head Start Expansion bill. Afterwards, she had the opportunity to tell the President about the work she

was doing--and all the work that needs to be done--to secure a better future for the children of the South Bronx and for all the children of America.

"That was one of the most rewarding experiences of my life," Martha says. "I never dreamed I would have the opportunity to share my work and my ideas with the President. It's been quite a journey. I hope the journey never ends, and as the Bible says, 'If I can help someone along the way, then my living shall not be in vain.'"

And it's a genre Martha can be proud of. She faced the kind of obstacles that destroy families and used them to improve the lives of hundreds of families. She has taught us that sometimes the solutions to our own problems can be found when we reach out to others.

Marian Wright Edelman is president of the Children's Defense Fund.



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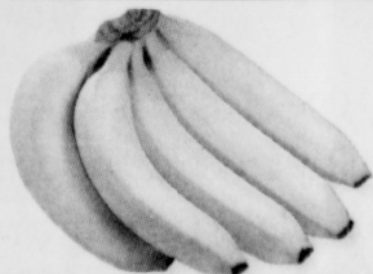
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