

SPRING



ASK THE DIETITIAN

YOUR QUESTIONS ANSWERED



Q. I've been seeing online campaigns saying school meals are not healthy. What exactly is in a school lunch?

A. All meals from The National School Lunch Program must follow strict nutrition guidelines. Every school lunch must have (at a minimum):



- ½ cup of fruit
- ¾ cup of vegetables (including a mix of colors like dark green, red and orange)
- 1 ounce of whole grains
- 1 ounce of meat or vegetarian protein
- 1 cup of low-fat or fat-free milk

Studies have shown students who purchased lunch at school were more likely to consume milk, fruit and vegetables compared to those who brought lunch from home. ^{1, 2, 3}

Q. But what about those photos I see of unappetizing school meals?

A. Many of them are either decades-old or staged and are not a true representation of the vibrant, fresh options served in cafeterias today.

Check out the “School Meals Rock” Pinterest and Facebook pages for delicious examples of school meals that are being served to millions of students nationwide. Arrange a visit with your school cafeteria manager to see and sample a school lunch firsthand.

Q. It's great school meals are serving more fruits and vegetables, but will my kid actually eat them?

A. Aramark's team of chefs, dietitians and school cafeteria managers understand new foods can be challenging for kids. That's why we offer our Healthy Bites sampling program. Students can sample new menu items – including fruits and veggies – and learn a fun food and nutrition fact about that recipe. This way, they can see if they like the food before buying the entire meal.

In a survey of over 100,000 students, 35% of them said they tried fruits and vegetables at school they had never tasted before. ⁴

Bottom line: the more exposure children have to seeing and tasting fruits and vegetables – both at school and at home – the more likely they are to start selecting and enjoying them.

¹ Hubbard KL, et al. What's in Children's Backpacks: Foods Brought From Home JADA. 2014; 1424-1431.

² Caruso ML, Cullen KW. Quality and Cost of Student Lunches Brought From Home. JAMA Pediatr. 2015;169(1):86-90.

³ Farris AR, et al. Nutritional Comparison of Packed and School Lunches in Pre-Kindergarten and Kindergarten Children Following the Implementation of the 2012-13 National School Lunch Program Standards. J Nutr Educ Behav 2014;46(6): 621-626.

⁴ ARAMARK Student ViewPOINT™ Survey 2015.



Since everyone's health history and nutritional needs are so different, please make sure that you talk with your doctor and a registered dietitian to get advice about a diet and exercise plan that's right for you. [visit myhealthyforlife.com](http://myhealthyforlife.com)



© 2016 Aramark. All rights reserved. Confidential and Proprietary to Aramark. May be used only with Aramark's written consent.