

## Nutrition Notes

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Marla Caplon, R.D., L.D.  
MdsNA Nutrition Chair

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### What Does Healthy Mean

- **Eating a variety** of fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meat, poultry, fish, nuts, beans, and low fat dairy items such as milk, cheese, and yogurt. These are exactly the foods that you provide in your cafeterias every day! Your school menus are planned to include these foods and menu choices are selected based on their nutritional quality and items acceptable to students!
- **Eating the right amounts** of the above foods. Portion control is so important. The amount needed depends on the age and activity of the child. Think about your menus – they reflect exactly this! Quantities of food served to pre-K and Headstart students are less than amounts given to our high school students. As children are growing, they need more food. Also, important to note as adults get older, smaller amounts of food are needed!
- **Encourage water consumption.** Drinking sufficient amounts of water is essential for both children and adults. Whether it's from water fountains, containers of water in the student dining area or through your cafeterias, you are doing this!

### *Some of the most important functions of water are:*

- *Helps to regulate body temperature*
- *Helps brain function*
- *Helps to excrete waste through perspiration and urination*
- *Helps to maximize physical performance*
- *Helps aid in digestion*
- *Helps to improve mood*

- **When snacking,** encourage fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and foods and beverages lower in salt and sugar. This is exactly what you do.
- **Being physically active.** Children and adults who are physically active are more likely to maintain a healthy weight, improve concentration and increase ability to learn, build strong bones and maintain healthy muscles. The nutritious meals you serve are important. Many of your cafeterias display posters of athletes who represent physical activity. In addition, many of your schools have clubs and programs for students to increase movement and physical activity.

You should be proud to know how vital the work you do is to creating a healthy child! The key components to a healthy child are steps that you take every day! The work you do is crucial; your cafeteria is a classroom! Hopefully, the messages you send and the foods you serve will be a foundation for students to learn about healthy eating and help them create lifelong healthy habits.

Thanks for all you do!

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