



Nutrition at Walden Green Montessori and The Whole Child

We are becoming increasingly aware that there is a direct correlation between good nutrition and healthy bodies and minds. In a study done for Whitby School, Vicki Kobliner MS RD states, “Numerous studies show that well-nourished students tend to be better students, while poorly nourished students do less well academically and on standardized tests. Pervasive poor eating habits and suboptimal nutrition of children who eat a Standard American Diet (SAD) present a challenge to meeting educational and academic goals.” She sites highly processed, sugary, low nutrient fast or “junk” foods which fill the body with excess empty calories are a barrier to learning. “Children are also more negatively impacted by the chemicals and additives in foods than adults because the toxins become more concentrated on a pound for pound basis.” The results are fatigue, difficulty with concentration, reoccurring headaches and/or a vague sense of not feeling well. Avoiding processed flours, sugars, additives and chemicals can make all the difference.

At Walden Green Montessori, lunch is an important part of the school day. It’s a relaxed social time as well as an opportunity for demonstrating grace and courtesy. The staff at Walden Green thanks you for your ongoing holistic support of your child's nutritional well-being. We witness daily how a student's diet is an important catalyst for optimal growth and development. As much as you can, please help us fulfill our mission of helping all our students reach towards their full potential- physically, cognitively, socially, and emotionally.

Please EXCLUDE the following from your child’s lunches and snacks:

- Highly sugared foods (candy, chocolate/granola bars, sugary cereal, fruit snacks, Go-Gurt, etc.)
- Highly processed foods (fast food, snack chips such Doritos/Cheetos, Pop Tarts, white bread, etc.)
- Soda of any of kind and sweetened drinks (Kool-Aid, Capri Sun, Sunny Delight, chocolate milk, etc.)
- “Juice” that isn’t 100% juice (many students drink water)
- Foods with excessive additives and preservatives (Lunchables, Twinkies, Kid Cuisine, etc.)
- Food items difficult to open or use

It has been our experience that a lunch high in protein with limited additives and natural sugars (i.e. fruit) helps create a calm, focused child.

Please provide your child with a nutritious midmorning snack (as needed). If your child attends after school care, please send him/her with a nutritious after school snack. Most of the snacks served to children should be fruits and vegetables, since most kids do not eat the recommended five to 13 servings of fruits and vegetables each day.

Suggested Food Items for Children @ Walden Green Montessori

FRUITS

Fruit is naturally sweet, so most kids love it. Fruit can be served whole, sliced, cut in half, cubed or in wedges. Canned, frozen and dried fruits often need little preparation.

- Apples (it can be helpful to use an apple corer)
- Apricots
- Bananas
- Blackberries
- Blueberries
- Cantaloupe
- Cherries
- Grapefruit
- Grapes
- Honeydew Melon
- Kiwis (cut in half and have your child eat it with a spoon)
- Mandarin oranges
- Mangoes
- Nectarines
- Oranges
- Peaches
- Pears
- Pineapple
- Plums
- Raspberries
- Strawberries
- Tangerines
- Watermelon

Applesauce (Unsweetened), Fruit Cups, and Canned Fruit

These have a long shelf life and are low-cost, easy, and healthy if canned in juice or light syrup. Examples of unsweetened applesauce include Mott's Natural Style and Mott's Healthy Harvest line.

Dried Fruit

Try raisins, apricots, apples, cranberries, pineapple, papaya, and others with little or no added sugars.

Frozen Fruit

Try freezing grapes or buy frozen blueberries, strawberries, peaches, mangoes, and melon.

Fruit Leathers

Some brands of fruit snacks are more like candy than fruit, and should be avoided due to their high content of added sugars and lack of fruit.

Fruit Salad

Get kids to help make a fruit salad. Use a variety of colored fruits to add to the appeal.

VEGETABLES

Vegetables can be served raw with dip or salad dressing:

- Broccoli
- Carrot sticks or baby carrots
- Cauliflower
- Celery sticks
- Cucumber
- Peppers (green, red, or yellow)
- Snap peas
- Snow peas
- String beans
- Tomato slices or grape or cherry tomatoes
- Yellow summer squash slices
- Zucchini slices

Dips

Try salad dressings, bean dips, guacamole, hummus (which comes in dozens of flavors), salsa, or peanut butter.

Salad

Make a salad or set out veggies like a salad bar and let the kids build their own salads.

Veggie Pockets

Cut whole-wheat pitas in half and let kids add veggies with dressing or hummus.

Ants on a Log

Let kids spread peanut butter on celery (with a plastic knife) and add raisins.

HEALTHY GRAINS (BREAD, CRACKERS, CEREALS, ETC)

Whole Wheat English Muffins, Pita or Tortillas

Stuff them with veggies or dip them in hummus or bean dip.

Breakfast Cereal

Whole grain cereals like Cheerios, Grape-Nuts, Raisin Bran, and Wheaties make good snacks. Look for cereals with no more than roughly 6g of sugar per serving.

Crackers

Whole grain crackers like Triscuits, which come in different flavors or thin crisps (or similar woven wheat crackers), Kalvi Rye crackers, or whole wheat Matzos can be served alone or with toppings, like cheese, peanut butter, or reduced-sodium luncheon meat.

Rice Cakes

Look for rice cakes made from brown (whole grain) rice. They come in many flavors, and can be served with or without toppings.

Popcorn

Look for low-fat popcorn in a bag or microwave popcorn. Or you can air pop the popcorn and season it, such as by spraying it with vegetable oil spray and adding parmesan cheese, garlic powder, or other non-salt spices.

Baked Tortilla Chips

They're usually low in fat, and taste great with salsa and/or bean dip.

Granola and Cereal Bars

Look for whole grain granola bars that are low in fat and sugars, like Barbara's Granola Bars (cinnamon raisin, oats and honey, and carob chip flavors), Nature Valley Crunchy Granola Bars (cinnamon, oats 'n honey, maple brown sugar, and peanut butter flavors), and Nature Valley Chewy Trail Mix Bars (fruit and nut flavor). Note: please avoid chocolate flavors.

Pretzels, Breadsticks, and Flatbreads

These items can be offered as snacks now and then. However, most of these snacks are not whole grain and most pretzels are high in salt.

YOGURT

Look for brands that are moderate in sugars (no more than about 30g of sugars in a 6-oz. cup), and high in calcium (at least 25% of daily value [DV] for calcium in a 6-oz. cup). Yogurt also can be served with fresh or frozen fruit or granola.