

Fueling Families with Power Foods

Power foods are nutrient dense foods that contain lots of healthy nutrients, such as protein, fiber, vitamins, and/or minerals. Try to eat these foods everyday. The good news is your kids probably already eat some of these power foods. Check out the table below to see which ones your kids are eating and how to incorporate a few new ones into your family meals.

<p>Spinach and Broccoli: Broccoli is full of vitamin C and they are both great sources of beta-carotene and folate. Spinach is packed with potassium and fiber.</p>		<p>Try using fresh or baby spinach and add it to a sandwich or you can even add to salad. If raw broccoli isn't a hit try steaming it and serve with a low-fat dressing</p>
<p>Blueberries and strawberries: Believe it or not blueberries are thought to contain more antioxidants than any other fruit. These antioxidants will help boost immunity.</p>	<p>Most kids will eat these delicious fruits by themselves. But if you are having trouble then try adding them to cereal, yogurt, or a smoothie.</p>	
<p>Carrots and Sweet Potatoes: Carrots and sweet potatoes contain over 200 carotenoids, one of which is beta-carotene. They also contain phytochemicals, which research suggests reduce the risk of cancer.</p>	<p>Try baby carrots with low-fat dressing for dipping. Another trick is to finely grate the carrots and add them to tomato sauces or pasta salad. Dice sweet potatoes and roast in the oven with a light brush of olive oil for a healthy alternative.</p>	
<p>Low-fat dairy products: Milk is an excellent source of calcium and Vitamin D to help your little ones build strong bones. Low-fat dairy products are also an excellent source of protein and potassium.</p>	<p>Try using plain, unsweetened yogurt and add fruit or granola for extra nutrient power. Blend 3oz low-fat yogurt, 3oz low-fat milk, fruit, and serve.</p>	
<p>Eggs (omega-3 enriched): Eggs are a great source of protein and is one of the best sources of lutein. Lutein is thought to help prevent eye disease as we get older. Eggs also contain choline which is vital for the production of memory stem cells.</p>	<p>Scrambled or over-easy eggs are a great way to start the day. If your child doesn't like eggs try making French toast using whole wheat bread.</p>	



<p>Oatmeal: This whole grain makes the list because it is high in fiber and contains protein. Fiber is digested slowly which will keep your child feeling fuller longer. It's no secret that children who eat breakfast perform better in school. Further studies have indicated that kids who eat oatmeal and other whole grain cereals with breakfast perform even better</p>	<p>Try adding some color or crunch. Add berries or their favorite dried fruit to add some color and added flavor. Add some crunch by adding nuts such as walnuts. Use oatmeal when baking. Kids love oatmeal cookies! Substitute some of the bread crumbs for oatmeal when making meatballs or meatloaf.</p>
<p>Nuts: Nuts contain healthy monounsaturated fats and fiber. Nuts, peanut butter, and soy nut butter are great sources of protein, vitamins, and minerals.</p>	<p>Peanut butter is not just for bread. Try using omega-3 enriched, trans-fat free peanut butter, such as Smart Balance® and spreading it on apples, celery, or bananas.</p> 
<p>Beans and Soybeans: These little beans are packed with nutrients. Beans contain the same benefits as other plant foods. In addition they are loaded with fiber and protein to keep your kids energized throughout the day.</p>	<p>Add refried beans to cheese quesadillas or make a bean and salsa dip. Minestrone soup is also jam packed with bean power. Also try introducing soymilk, made from soybeans, into your child's diet.</p>
<p>Lean Beef: Iron deficiency is the most common nutrient deficiency in the world. Lean beef is one of the most absorbable sources of iron in our diet and it is also a great source of protein and zinc. Adding just 1oz of lean beef per day to your child's diet can make a big difference in the body's ability to absorb iron from other sources.</p>	<p>Try making beef kabobs by cutting up bright colored vegetables and cooking them on the grill.</p> 
<p>Water: is often overlooked as an essential part of a child's diet. Even a mild case of dehydration can affect a child's ability to perform in school and physical activities by making them irritable and tired. Also not enough water in the diet may create a false sense of hunger.</p>	<p>Make water part of your child's afternoon snack rather than fruit juices. Try adding a lemon wedge for some added flavor. Replace the fruit juice with their favorite piece of fresh fruit.</p> 

Websites to visit for more information:

http://www.calolive.org/foodservice/findings/findings_2005q4.html

<http://teamnnutrition.usda.gov/Resources/mypyramidtips.html>

<http://recipes.familyeducation.com/>