



Wellness Roundup

Nutrition & Wellness Committee

Special Edition

FUN & HEALTHY IDEAS FOR CLASSROOM BIRTHDAYS!

BY DEBBIE ALEMAN, CERTIFIED PERSONAL TRAINER

Birthdays are special days for everyone, whether you're turning 5 or 75, and we all want our friends to share these special occasions with us. For kids, bringing in a treat to share with their classmates is a long standing tradition, but unfortunately for many children and parents, these "treats" are just another obstacle in their battle against obesity and its devastating effects on kid's physical and psychological well-being.

When it comes to childhood obesity, no one factor is to blame, but we can all be instrumental in helping to stop this condition. If we work as a team- a 'family' consisting of parents, kids and teachers, we can create an environment that celebrates our children, while respecting the needs of other children struggling to be healthier. Let's think outside the 'donut box' and find fun and creative alternatives to Krispy Kremes and cupcakes. Now, I'm not suggesting packs of carrot sticks- I did say "fun" alternatives! Try bringing non-food items as birthday treats. There are many affordable options, depending on your child's age and interests... Here are a few just about any kid would love!

***Custom CD's:** Have the birthday child make a playlist of their favorite songs and burn it onto a CD for each of their classmates.

***Bubbles or Jump Ropes:** Younger kids especially love bubbles. Clear it with the teacher ahead of time and spend the last 10 minutes before lunch or before the end of school having a huge bubble chase or a jump off with their new jump ropes. It's a lot of fun & great exercise, too!

***Beach Balls or Frisbees:** These toys are kid favorites that can easily be customized with the names of their classmates using craft paint or markers. Or bring the markers along for the kids to custom decorate them in class! (Don't forget to clear it with their teacher first!)

***Fun Pencils & Colorful Notepads**

***Art Supplies or Craft Sets**

***Custom Coloring Books:** You can print coloring pages from the internet and bind them together with ribbon to make into a fun book. You can also include word searches, crossword puzzles or other fun mind games.



Try sources like Big Lots, Oriental Trading Company and close-out or after-holiday specials. These treats may take a little extra planning and effort to put together but they are more personal, fun, and long lasting than a cupcake!

If you do decide that a treat is the only way to go, try some of these alternatives:

***Mini Cupcakes:** Instead of picking up the grocery store cupcakes with an inch plus of sugary frosting, try making your own mini versions at home. A standard cupcake with 2 tablespoons of frosting averages 400 calories and 15 grams of fat. Mini cupcakes have about 1/3 the calories and fat, while still being a festive treat that's just right for a child-size appetite.

***Mini Carmel Apples:** Carmel apples are a popular fall treat- try making kid-sized versions by using the small Granny Smith or Gala apples currently available in the markets. Kids will get all the fiber and vitamins of the apple while still enjoying a sweet treat.

(For more recipe ideas, please see page 2 of this document.)

Another helpful step is to package the treats individually and have the birthday boy or girl hand them out at the end of the day, instead of before lunch. Children have a small stomach capacity (not to mention a limited attention span at lunch!) and it doesn't take much to fill them up enough to dump their healthy lunch in the garbage and head straight to the playground with their friends. Unfortunately, this sets them up for a sugar crash in the afternoon, which doesn't do good things for their grades or their moods! Giving out the treat at the end of the day also helps parents be aware of what their kids are getting in school. There are sometimes several birthdays in the same week (sometimes even in the same day!) and while the occasional treat is fine for most kids, having 3 or 4 in a week can undo a lot of healthy habits at home. If parents are more aware of what their kids are receiving at school, they can make adjustments in their child's other food choices to help compensate for these extra sweets.

*Let's try to all work together to make our birthday Wrangler's feel special, while also helping **all** the children have happy and **healthy** birthdays in their future!*

HEALTHY RECIPES FOR SCHOOL BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

By Karen Begun, Psy.D., Licensed Clinical Psychologist

Consider these delicious, healthier recipes for school birthday celebrations instead of donuts, cupcakes and cookies, which are high in fat and sugar. Children will love these special treats!

RASPBERRY BANANA POPS WITH CANDY SPRINKLES

If your child likes ice cream bars, they'll love these frozen treats! Creamy frozen bananas covered with raspberry yogurt and candy sprinkles create a yummy snack or treat. Create your own recipe by trying other flavors of yogurt and other types of sprinkles.

Ingredients:

Bananas- small to medium size
Large wooden Popsicle sticks
Low fat raspberry yogurt
Chocolate or rainbow sprinkles

Directions:

1. Cut each banana in half crosswise. Insert wooden stick into the cut-side of each half.
2. Pour yogurt on dinner plate. Roll bananas in yogurt until they are completely covered. Hold bananas upside down and allow excess yogurt to drip off the tip onto the plate.
3. Next, hold the yogurt covered bananas over another plate and sprinkle enough sprinkles to cover the banana.
4. Place finished pops on wax paper lined baking sheet and place in freezer for two hours before eating.



PERSONAL PRETZELS

Roll the dough into the first letter of each classmate's name!

Ingredients:

1 envelope (1/4 oz) active dry yeast
1/4 cup honey
1 1/2 cups warm water
5 Tbs sugar
2 tsp salt
4 1/4 cups flour
1 Tbs. cinnamon
4 Tbs butter melted

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees. Line 2 baking sheets with tin foil.
2. In large mixing bowl, dissolve the yeast in the warm water. Add the salt, honey, and 1 Tbs. of the sugar and stir well. With an electric mixer, thoroughly blend in the flour at low, then medium speed.
3. Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured surface and knead until its smooth (for about 5 min.) Divide the dough into 16 roughly equal pieces, and then roll into a 10-12 inch long rope.
4. Bake the dough shapes for 15-20 min, until lightly browned. In a small bowl, stir together the cinnamon and remaining 4 Tbs. of sugar. Now, leaving the pretzels on the foil, brush them with the melted butter and sprinkle the cinnamon sugar on top. Store in an airtight container and reheat them before eating.
Makes about 16 pretzels.

On the foil-lined baking sheets, shape each rope into a letter (when making your letter, remember the dough will expand a little when it's cooked).

4. Bake the dough shapes for 15-20 min, until lightly browned. In a small bowl, stir together the cinnamon and remaining 4 Tbs. of sugar. Now, leaving the pretzels on the foil, brush them with the melted butter and sprinkle the cinnamon sugar on top. Store in an airtight container and reheat them before eating.

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RAISIN BUDDY BANANA MUFFINS

These yummy muffins taste a lot like chocolate cake; the banana makes them moist, and the cocoa powder gives them a rich chocolate flavor.

Ingredients:

2 very ripe, medium bananas, peeled
1 cup sugar
1 egg, beaten
6 Tbs cocoa powder
1/3 cup vegetable oil
1 tsp baking soda
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp salt
1/4 tsp baking powder
1/2 cup raisins

Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Spray muffin pans with non-stick cooking spray.
3. Put bananas into a food processor or blender. Secure lid and blend until smooth. Scrape banana into a mixing bowl and combine with eggs and oil.
4. In another bowl, combine flour, sugar, cocoa, baking soda, salt and baking powder. Add banana mixture and stir until moistened. Stir in raisins.
5. Spoon 1/3 cup of batter into prepared muffin pan cups. Bake for 20-25 minutes.

Makes 10-12 regular or 48 mini muffins.

***RAINBOW FRUIT KABOBS** - assorted colorful fruits and marshmallows on a skewer.

***RICE KRISPY TREATS**- a good alternative to donuts and cupcakes.

***HAVE A POPCORN PARTY!**

***SMORES**- graham crackers with marshmallow spread filling and mini-chocolate chips.

***FRESH FRUIT POPSICLES**- use whatever fruits are in season or frozen unsweetened 100% natural fruits.

For more ideas check out 'Dole 5 a Day Kids Cookbook'- www.dole5aday.com or Emeril's 'There's A Chef In My Soup! Recipes for the Kid in Everyone.'