

Helping Your Kids Make Smart Food Choices

(NAPSA)—It's more important than ever to help children understand about healthy food choices, well-balanced meals, portion control and the benefits of increased physical activity. For most busy families, however, it can be tough to find the time.

Fortunately, the frozen and refrigerated food aisles of the grocery store can provide many healthful, balanced and nutritious options that can be prepared in minutes. What may be even better, special deals on many popular frozen and refrigerated foods can be found in October when the National Frozen & Refrigerated Foods Association (NFRA) celebrates the Cool Food for Kids school education program.

Consider Cool Tips for Cool Food Choices for your kids:

- Make half the plate fruits and vegetables.
- Make at least half of all the grains you choose whole grains.
- Don't forget the dairy. There are terrific cheeses. Have fat-free or 1 percent milk with your meal.
- Vary protein choices among meat, poultry, fish and eggs.
- For a treat, whip up a smoothie with yogurt and frozen fruits.
- Add frozen veggies to your favorite dish or eat them as a side.
- Get your family up and moving by planning fun activities for after dinner.
- Try this great way to add vegetables and beans to a traditional dish to make it healthier and even tastier.

Mac and Cheese with Veggies

- 1 (12-oz) pkg. small pasta shell macaroni**
- 1 egg**
- 2 cups low-fat milk**
- 2 Tbsp butter, melted**



Mac and Cheese with Veggies is a family-friendly dish with added vegetables and beans for a tastier, more healthful version.

- 2½ cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese**
- 1 (10-oz) pkg. frozen mixed peas and carrots**
- 1 cup red kidney beans (from can), drained and rinsed**

Bring large pot of water to a boil, add pasta and cook for 3 minutes. Add frozen peas and carrots mixture and cook for 5–7 minutes or until pasta is tender. Drain and set aside. In large bowl, whisk egg and milk together. Add melted butter and cheese and stir well. Toss in pasta and vegetables; then stir in beans. Put entire mixture into lightly greased large casserole dish (spread evenly). Bake uncovered in a 350° oven for 25–30 minutes or until top is lightly browned. Serves 4.

More delicious recipes, tips and information are at www.EasyHomeMeals.com, as are details of the Ski or Sea Family Vacation Sweepstakes, created to celebrate Cool Food for Kids.