

# HEART HEALTHY COOKING

## Back To School The Heart Healthy Way

(NAPS)—Nutritionists say it can be easy for school-aged kids to learn healthy eating habits—all it may take is a little “home work.”

Studies have shown that healthy eating habits established early in life tend to remain with people well into their adult years. To help kids enjoy heart-healthy diets, the American Heart Association recommends parents lead by example and pack children’s lunch boxes with nutritious low fat, low cholesterol foods like:

- low or non-fat dairy products, such as skim milk and low fat string cheese;
- sandwiches made from whole grain breads, lean meats or fish;
- limit high fat condiments, try low fat substitutes such as mustard instead of mayonnaise;
- pack fresh fruits and vegetables such as carrots or celery sticks, apples and oranges; and
- baked pretzels and low-fat yogurt can be a tasty treat.

To help parents choose heart-healthy foods for their children and themselves, the American Heart Association established its Food Certification Program.

The program uses a red heart with a white check mark to indicate foods that meet the American Heart Association’s standards. Foods and beverages with the heart-check mark on their labels are low in fat and cholesterol and can be part of a heart-healthy diet for healthy people over age two.

Foods with the heart check mark are:

- low fat (less than or equal to



**Heart-healthy lunches can start a lifelong habit in kids.**

three grams per serving);

- low in saturated fat (less than or equal to one gram per serving);

• low cholesterol (less than or equal to 20 milligrams per serving);

- have a sodium value of less than or equal to 480 milligrams for individual foods; and

• contain at least 10 percent of the daily value of one or more of these nutrients: protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, iron or dietary fiber.

Meats must meet the USDA’s standard for extra lean.

For more information on diet and nutrition, visit [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org) or call the American Heart Association at (800) 242-8721 (AHA-USA1) and ask for a free copy of the *Shop Smart With Heart* brochure.

For a complete list of certified products, visit [www.americanheart.org/foodcertification](http://www.americanheart.org/foodcertification).