



# HEALTH MATTERS

## Pack Meals That Make A Difference

By Miriam Nelson, Ph.D.

(NAPSA)—Did you know that most children over the age of 8 are deficient in calcium and vitamin D intake, according to a recent study from the American Academy of Pediatrics? And that's not all. Most women—about 75 percent—also do not get enough calcium and vitamin D in their daily diet.

Deficiency in these two nutrients can lead to many health problems, and osteoporosis in particular. Each year, the United States alone spends \$20 million on osteoporotic fractures. Ironically, osteoporosis is a largely preventable disease. If you take care of your bones from childhood throughout life with adequate calcium and vitamin D intake, exercise and healthy lifestyle choices, you will not become one of the one in two women who suffer an osteoporosis-related fracture in their lifetime; nor will you have to deal with the hump your grandmother may have had.

**Q: My kids don't drink enough milk because they do not care for the flavor. How can I pack a lunch that is both nutritious and appealing to my children's tastes?**

Delicious packables can open your kids' eyes and mouths to healthy foods. To pack a healthy lunch that your children will enjoy, make nutritious foods more appealing to them by varying what you put in their lunch box. Look for creative alternatives. If



**Moms can be so busy making sure their children eat healthy foods that they may miss out on their own nutrition.**

regular milk is a problem, try flavored milk or minicartons of calcium-enriched orange juice, cheese-string snacks or tiny containers of yogurt. Let children choose their own smart substitutes from a limited selection.

Treats don't have to be "store bought"; in fact, kids often like to eat what they help prepare. For example, bring a little fun to the lunch box with "ants on a log"—cream cheese on celery dotted with dried fruit. Let children choose the "ants" from a miniselection of dried cranberries, currants, nuts and raisins. Mix in a few chocolate chips for a surprise. Offer kid-friendly snacks that you know will appeal to the taste buds and be healthy. Remember to always include a serving each of whole grain, low-fat dairy, a vegetable or fruit and lean protein. If your youngster insists on junk food, you may want to allow it but try to

limit indulgences to once a day.

**Q: My schedule is so busy I often do not have time to sit down and have a meal. What are the best snack or meal options for women on the go?**

Moms are often too busy packing their kid's lunch to find time for their own breakfast. Unfortunately, erratic eating behavior can cause moms to grab less than nutritious food. Look for snacks that help keep your nutrition on track, such as new Citracal® Creamy Bites, a delicious way to get calcium and vitamin D. The individually packed, bite-size treats easily fit in your purse and each one contains half the Recommended Daily Allowance of calcium and vitamin D in the flavor of your choice. They are creamy, bonbon-sized squares that come in Chocolate Fudge, Caramel or Lemon Cream and taste like a lot more than the mere 35 calories they are. Because they contain calcium citrate, they can be taken anytime day or night, with or without meals. Look for other grab-and-go foods for grown-ups and keep a stock in your fridge and pantry, such as pre-cleaned vegetables and pre-cut fruit. Just because your hectic life won't always allow you to sit down and have a meal, you don't have to miss out on good nutrition. And who knows, maybe your kids will enjoy the new treats as well!

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