

Get into a healthy routine for the school year ahead

New and demanding routines on those first few days back at school can be intimidating for both parents and kids alike. To assist, the Canadian Health Food Association (CHFA) offers some tips to help your little ones start off the school year feeling strong:

Play and exercise for better sleep— Research shows that exercising helps you fall asleep faster and stay asleep for longer. This is especially true for kids. Unfortunately, studies show that only seven per cent of kids in Canada get the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity each day. Make sure your child gets enough sleep every night by encouraging physical activity during the day.

Go organic— Teaching our kids about the benefits of organic foods is almost as important as making sure that they eat breakfast every



day. When you buy organic foods, you're investing in your health and the health of your family, and you're supporting environmentally sustainable practices. These are all important messages we should be teaching our children.

Add a multivitamin to your mix— Mornings can be busy and hectic. Sometimes kids just don't

have time to eat a full, healthy breakfast to get all the nutrients they need. Supplementing your kids' diet with a multivitamin might be a good idea to ensure they are getting all the essential nutrients. There are multivitamins formulated for every age, ranging from kids to adults. Speak with your health care practitioner to

determine which multivitamin is best for every member of your family.

Pack a brain boosting lunch— Packing the right food for lunch can also play a role in boosting your child's brain power. Foods that contain poly-unsaturated fats are good for brain health and provide energy. If possible, try to slip avocados or pumpkin seeds into school lunches.

Add omega-3s for brain health— The long-chain omega-3 fats in fish oil have been shown to improve cognitive performance, including improved behaviour, memory, and reading. Getting the right amount of healthy fats during pregnancy and childhood has shown to have a number of benefits for children, including increased intelligence and visual acuity. Omega-3 supplements are

available in different forms for children and adults.

Don't forget about vitamin D— In September, the days get shorter and back-to-school means more time indoors, both of which can lead to a decrease in vitamin D. Children and toddlers need vitamin D to absorb calcium and form strong teeth and bones. It has also been linked to increased immunity and disease prevention. Consider adding a vitamin D supplement formulated for children.

When adding supplements to your child's diet, it is always a good idea to speak with your health care practitioner. Visit chfa.ca for more information on how to help your child thrive and enjoy a healthy transition back to school this September.

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