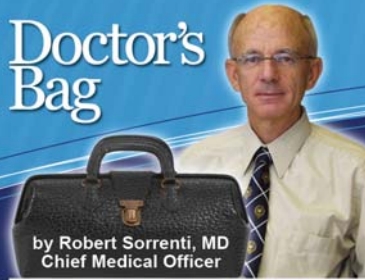


## Doctor's Bag



by Robert Sorrenti, MD  
Chief Medical Officer

### Overweight Kids Are at Risk for Serious Health Issues

My column in last month's eHouseCall described ways for parents to set a healthy example for their children. It is also very important that parents understand the medical risks of childhood obesity.

Obese children are at risk for high cholesterol, high blood pressure, and cardiovascular disease.

Children and adolescents who are obese are at greater risk for bone and joint problems, sleep apnea, and social and psychological problems such as stigmatization and poor self-esteem.

Obese children are more likely than children of normal weight to become overweight or obese adults, and therefore more at risk for associated adult health problems, including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, stroke, several types of cancer, and osteoarthritis.

The good news is that healthy lifestyle habits, including healthy eating and physical activity, can lower the risk of becoming obese and developing related diseases.

Packing a healthy lunch is a great start, but monitoring what your children eat at home and what they snack on outside the home is equally important. Work with your kids to set guidelines for healthy eating and make sure they understand why proper nutrition is so important.

## HLInfo YOUR MONTHLY GUIDE TO HEALTH CARE AWARENESS

### What's in Your Child's Lunch Box?

While many school lunch programs are providing healthier options for students, the typical cafeteria meal is still higher in fat and calories than it should be. A packed lunch of nutritional foods that taste good is a great option for many students.

**Think outside the lunch box**  
A bologna sandwich, chips, cookies and a juice pouch provide about half the maximum amount of fat an adult should eat in a day. Add the calories, sodium and sugar and your student just might be better off with cafeteria food.

So what's a parent to do? Here are some lunch-packing tips from Margo Wootan, senior scientist with the Center for Science in the Public Interest:

In the sandwich –

- Use whole-grain bread. Look for the word "whole" in the ingredient list. The terms "multi-grain" and "wheat" don't necessarily mean "whole-grain".
- Leave out the cheese or use reduced fat cheese.
- Use low-fat lunch meat.
- Use low-fat mayo or non-fat alternatives like mustard, salsa or chutney.
- Add a vegetable or fruit to the sandwich – cucumber, sprouts, lettuce, tomato – even apple slices.

With the sandwich –

- Encourage your child to choose 1% or skim milk.
- If you pack juice, make sure it's 100% juice. Read the label.
- Put fruit in the lunch box every day. Make it more appealing by cutting it up and wrapping it in plastic wrap.
- Ideally, skip the cookies. Save the sweets for a special treat after school or after dinner.
- Instead of regular chips, pack baked chips, pretzels or low fat crackers. Go for low-sodium products and keep portions small.

#### Involve your child in menu selection

Get your kids involved in the process. Letting them help plan the lunch menu is a good way to ensure that they will like – and eat – what you have packed.



## DidUKnow?

From the Center for Science in the Public Interest, here are 10 of the worst and best foods/drinks for kids (think school lunches):

Ten of the Worst:

1. Soda pop
2. Whole milk
3. Hamburgers
4. Hot dogs
5. Bologna
6. American cheese
7. Pizza loaded with cheese and meat
8. French fries and tator tots
9. Candy bars
10. Ice cream

Ten of the Best:

1. Fresh fruit and vegetables (carrot sticks, cantaloupe, oranges, watermelon, strawberries, etc.)
2. Skim or 1% milk
3. Extra-lean ground beef
4. Low-fat hot dogs
5. Chicken breast or leg without skin or breading
6. Low fat cheese cubes
7. Fat-free chips
8. Seasoned air-popped popcorn
9. Whole wheat crackers
10. Non-fat ice cream or non-fat frozen yogurt

#### Information Sources

Action Alliance for Children ([www.4children.org](http://www.4children.org))  
Center for Science in the Public Interest, Nutrition Action Newsletter; What Are We Feeding Our Kids?  
Kids Health ([www.kidshealth.org](http://www.kidshealth.org))  
USDA/ARS Children's Nutrition Research Center at Baylor  
College of Medicine ([www.bcm.edu](http://www.bcm.edu))  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/obesity/>)