

Fruit break Guidelines for Parents

What is a fruit Break?

A fruit break is a set break which allows children to eat fruit (or raw vegetables) in the classroom. Students 're-fuel' with fruit or vegetables. This is great both for health and performance in school.

Why have a fruit break?

Eating fruits and vegetables is vital for good health. Unfortunately, most Irish children do not eat enough of these essential foods. Fruit Breaks encourage fruit and vegetable consumption in children and reinforce the concept of healthy eating. Fruit breaks give children the opportunity to eat an extra portion of fruit.

The World Health Organisation reckons that inadequate intake of fruit and vegetables causes:

- 19% of gastrointestinal cancer
- 31% of ischaemic heart disease
- 11% of stroke



Fruit for growing children

Fruit and vegetables are packed full of some important nutrients that are essential for growing children. Because they are low in calories and packed full of goodness, fruits and veggies are the ideal snack food for your child.

Adult diseases begin in childhood

Many serious illnesses take a lifetime to develop. For example, heart disease begins in childhood, and many cancers result from habits developed in childhood. Regular fruit and veg consumption can help protect your child from heart disease, some cancers, stroke, type II diabetes and obesity.

40%

...of all deaths in Ireland are because of heart disease/stroke

25%

...of all deaths in Ireland are caused by cancer

Two-Thirds

...of children in Ireland don't eat fruit every day

Fruit for health

Fruits and vegetables contain beneficial phytochemicals that "fight" to protect health. They are packed full of beneficial vitamins, minerals and fibre. Different fruits and veggies have different nutrients, so it is important to eat a wide variety of these foods.

What can parents do?

Parents will need to provide their children with an extra piece of fruit (or veg) to eat in the classroom. Always wash fruit or vegetables at home before you send them. For younger children send cut up fruit in a plastic tub, or smaller whole fruits. Please don't send processed "fruit" snacks like fruit winders...these are calorie laden and don't have the goodness of proper fruit.

Parent Run Fruit Breaks

If the school is willing, parents can run school fruit breaks. This allows revenue to be generated for the parents council. Children pay for fruit every week, and a parent co-ordinator organises the delivery and distribution of fruit. RedBranch can help to source appropriate suppliers.



What Fruits are Allowed in the Classroom

- All fresh fruit (e.g. whole fruits, chopped melon etc.)
- Fruit canned in water, juice or 'no added sugar' (e.g. peach slices)
- Dried fruit - please limit this as it contains concentrated sugar and tends to cling to teeth, increasing risk of tooth decay

Tips to Support Fruit Breaks

Be a role model

Let your children see you eat and enjoy fruit!

Plan ahead

Have fruit ready to take to school

Go shopping with your children

Let children choose fruits/veg for school

Buy in Season

For taste, quality and value for money

Try Organic

No harmful pesticides and taste great

Choose quality

Try to avoid bruised or over-ripe fruit

Select small manageable pieces of fruit

For small children, they are easier to handle.

Encourage variety

Don't let your child get bored with fruit.

Fruit & Veggies for Health...5-10 pieces a day!

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