WHAT'S UP…

Over the past few weeks, your child has been tasting strawberry, cucumber, and brown rice in classroom activities, meals, and snacks offered by the Head Start. Over the next few weeks, try adding strawberries, cucumbers, and brown (or wild) rice into meals and snacks at home. The more you and your family try new foods together, the more likely that your child will be willing to try new foods in the future.

In this newsletter, we have ideas and recipes using strawberries, cucumbers and brown rice. Remember to always cut all foods into small pieces no larger than ½ inch to prevent choking in young children.

DON'T FORGET...

Look for CHILE shelf labels this month at your local CHILE participating grocery store. While there, visit the CHILE display rack and pick up recipe cards for meals and snacks to make at home using cucumber, strawberry or brown rice!

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The Child Health Initiative for Lifelong Eating and Exercise (CHILE) Project is a partnership between the University of New Mexico and your Head Start. It is a program designed to reduce the risk of obesity and diabetes in Hispanic and Native American children in New Mexico.

SAY NO TO SODA!
Sodas, fruit drinks that are not 100% juice (such as orangeade and fruit punch), and other drinks with added sugar are not as healthy for your family. These drinks are high in calories but low in vitamins and minerals. Drinking soda or even too much juice fills up young children’s tummies and can keep them from eating foods that are better for them.

Drinking too much soda may lead to overweight, obesity and diabetes, as well as other chronic diseases. Drinking soda and sugar sweetened beverages often leads to painful and expensive cavities in young children’s teeth.

Alternatives to sodas and fruit drinks include water, 1% or nonfat milk, and 100% fruit juice. Preschoolers over the age of two need 2 to 3 servings (cups) of lowfat (1%) or nonfat milk or dairy products per day. 100% fruit juice should be limited to 4-6 ounces per day, which is only ½ to ¾ cup per day. Water should be offered to children throughout the day.

Remember that changes are easier to make when everyone in your family makes them. It will be easier to limit sodas and other sugar-sweetened drinks for children if everyone in your family does the same.

RECIPE #1: Strawberry Smoothie
This recipe can be made for a snack, breakfast or dessert!

Ingredients:
- 3 cups fresh or frozen strawberries (if frozen, NOT packed in sugar)
- 1 6-8oz container NONFAT or LOWFAT plain yogurt
- 2/3 cup NONFAT or LOWFAT (1%) milk

Directions:
1. Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth.
2. Serve immediately.

Tips:
1. Turn the blender off and stir the fruit if it gets stuck.
2. If you don’t have a blender, use a fork or a potato masher.
3. Feel free to add another fruit, such as banana, orange or peach.

RECIPE #2: Cucumber and Brown Rice Salad
This recipe can be made for a snack, or as a side dish with a larger meal.

Ingredients:
- 2 cups brown rice, cooked (regular or instant)
- 2 cups cucumbers, peeled and diced into pieces no larger than ½ an inch.
- 1 cup tomato, diced and seeded (or use canned diced tomatoes)
- 1 teaspoon dill, dried (or fresh, but then use 2 teaspoons)
- ¼ cup lowfat or fat free Italian salad dressing

Directions:
1. Cook the brown rice according to package directions. The time this takes will vary depending if the brown rice is regular or instant.
2. In a bowl, toss together the cucumbers, tomatoes, dill and salad dressing. Add the cooked rice.
3. Chill for one hour and serve.

C is for Cucumbers!
- On average, there are 200 seeds on just one strawberry!
- Strawberries are a great addition to fruit salads or green salads.
- Always yummy on their own or try them sliced on top of cereal or oatmeal.
- Try adding to cottage cheese or low-fat yogurt for a refreshing snack.