



# 'Back to school' with healthy lunches

"Well, it's that time of year again—the back to school, back to work rush.

Many children will be taken to the bus stop for their first ever school bus ride ever. How exciting! With new beginnings come new routines... good, bad and everything in between.

Many parents will start packing their children's lunches for the school year again, which may sound easy, but did you know that many commonly packed fruits, juices, cereals and breads contain a lot of sugars and starch? In excess, these will contribute to a myriad of increasing childhood problems such as obesity, childhood diabetes and cavities.

A healthy and balanced diet is essential to maintaining good oral health. Establishing good nutritional habits in kids and teenagers often starts with you. Here are a few tips to help you prepare a lunch that will meet your child's dental and nutritional needs.

You should be packing various fruits, vegetables and cheese in your child's lunchbox as snacks. Remember, variety and creativity is the key to keeping these lunches fun. Some of the healthiest fruit choices are those that contain more water, such as melons, apples, pears and cantaloupes. Although almost all types of vegetables are good, children often will enjoy celery, cucumbers, carrots and cauliflower, and the added

benefit of mind promoting a healthy lifestyle for our little ones.

## Candy buy-back 'thank you'

On behalf of our office I would like to thank everyone who participated in our first ever Halloween Candy Buy-Back. What a huge success! Last year we bought back children's Halloween candy at \$1 dollar per pound and sent it to our Canadian troops in Afghanistan. We will be having our second annual event again this year, so watch out for it. We are trying to help brighten the smiles of our soldiers with gifts from our children back home. In difficult times, what could mean more than to know that people at home are thinking of you. Also, what could be more significant to a child than his or her candy. What a huge act of kindness was shown by the children of LaSalle to give over 202.5 kilograms (450 lbs.) of Halloween candy to our troops last year!

This past Monday was Labour Day, and most of us were mentally thrust back into our working world. Summer's over. "Time to make the doughnuts!"

Let's just make sure that we don't put them in our children's lunches.

*Contributed by Dr. Michael F. Bencak B.Sc., DDS of Dental Optometric Centre.*



benefit is that eating these can help clean children's teeth as well. Sometimes, a small container of vegetable dip such as ranch dressing can mean the difference between your children eating the vegetables or not. Excellent cheese choices would be aged cheeses such as Cheddar, Swiss or Monterey Jack. Studies have shown that aged cheeses can actually help prevent tooth decay!

Some common snacking choices that should be limited or avoided are foods that stick to teeth and cause cavities. These snacks cause cavities because saliva is unable to naturally rinse the sugary foods away from the teeth. Some of these foods include peanut butter, raisins, granola bars, honey, cookies, jelly beans, caramel and hard candies. If you choose to send some of these snacks occasionally, try to send along a toothbrush that they might just use. Although we can't follow our children around on a daily basis, we should