

TABLETALK

OCTOBER, 2009 ❁ CHILD FOOD PROGRAM OF TEXAS ❁ P.O. BOX 5465 ❁ KATY, TX 77491 ❁ 281-395-7000, TOLL-FREE: 877-395-6560, Fax: 281-395-7002

What is good nutrition?

Good nutrition is having the calories we need for energy and the nutrients essential for:

- proper growth, repair, and maintenance of body tissues.
- resistance to disease and infection.
- prevention of deficiencies that lead to problems such as anemia, goiter, scurvy, and rickets.

In recent decades, medical researchers have found that good nutrition can also help reduce the risks of coronary heart diseases and certain types of cancer. While we can sometimes get by with less than an optimum diet, to *thrive* we need a healthy diet. A healthy diet provides:

- essential nutrients and energy to prevent nutritional deficiencies and excesses.
- the right balance of carbohydrate, fat, and protein to reduce risks for chronic disease.
- a variety of foods, including plenty of grains, vegetables, and fruits.

Nutrients Needed for Growth and Development

Many different nutrients are needed for good health. These include carbohydrates, fat, protein, vitamins, minerals, and water. Most foods contain more than one nutrient. And some foods provide more nutrients than others. The best strategy? *Choose a variety of foods.* To include the greatest amount of nutrients and meet the recommendations of the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, choose a variety of foods for each meal throughout the week. A perfect food with all essential nutrients does not exist. A food may be a good source of some vitamins and minerals, but still lack other important ones. By regularly serving a variety of foods, you will help children learn healthy food habits. You will also help make sure the children will not become bored with the foods you offer them.

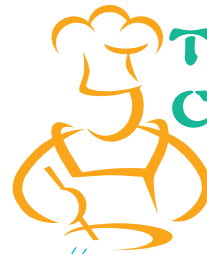
Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are our most important source of energy. Carbohydrates come from many sources and are made up of two different types: simple carbohydrates and complex carbohydrates. Simple

carbohydrates (for example, the sugars which are found in milk and fruit) provide our bodies with energy that goes to work for our bodies right away. What do complex carbohydrates provide? Complex carbohydrates give a longer lasting form of energy. Foods rich in complex carbohydrates come from grains (pasta, breads, and cereals), vegetables, and legumes (dried beans and peas).

How much of the foods we eat should be carbohydrates? Our daily diets need to include foods that provide simple carbohydrates and foods that provide complex carbohydrates. Over half of the foods we eat should be from these foods.

—(to be continued)—



Tips from Chef Bob

BAKED ZITI

Ingredients: 1 pkg. (16 oz.) ziti pasta; 1 jar (26 oz.) spaghetti sauce; 1 container (15 oz.) Ricotta Cheese; 1 pkg. (8 oz.) Shredded Mozzarella Cheese, divided; 1/4 cup Grated Parmesan Cheese. **Directions:** Preheat oven to 350°F. Cook pasta as directed on package. Drain pasta, reserving 1/2 cup of the pasta cooking water. Mix spaghetti sauce, ricotta cheese and reserved 1/2 cup pasta cooking water in large bowl. Add pasta and 1/2 cup of the mozzarella cheese; mix lightly. Spoon into 13x9-inch baking dish sprayed with cooking spray; sprinkle with remaining mozzarella cheese and the Parmesan cheese. Cover. Bake 30 min.; uncover. Bake an additional 10 min. or until heated through.