



# live well, work well

September 2012

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## Avoid the Back-to-School Blues

The annual transition from summer vacation back to school is a difficult time for most children, but it can be an equally stressful period for parents. If you're like most, you may be worried about how your kids will transition to a new grade. Read on for some practical things you can do to prepare your child for the school year—and set your mind at ease.

- **Re-establish routines** – By setting a regular bedtime and mealtime for your children, you prepare them for the structured schedule they will need to follow at school. Begin the routine a few weeks in advance, so they are wide awake for breakfast on the first day of school.
- **Freeze a few dinners** – Keep a couple of meals in your freezer for the first few weeks of school. This way you won't have to stress about cooking and will have more time to spend with your kids.
- **Create a homework space** – Designate and clear a special area where your children will be able to do their homework in peace. During the weeks leading up to school, consider offering crafts or projects they can do area to help them get used to working there.
- **Attend parent-teacher night** – Take the time to visit with your children's teachers so you know what to expect in the coming year.

- **Clear your own schedule** – As the big day approaches, be prepared to spend time with your children when they need it. Postpone any business trips or major projects until the school year is underway so that you can be there for your children when they want to talk about how they feel.



- **Be enthusiastic** – The best thing you can do for your children is to be excited about the new school year. When you are confident, your children will be confident, too.

While preparing your children for the first day of school can really help their transition, it is only part of the equation. Especially during the first few weeks, set aside time each night to talk about how your children are feeling about school and positively reinforce the experiences they've had—this will help your children adjust to their new grade.

## Whole Grains Month

Do you know what a whole grain is? According to the Whole Grains Council, for a grain or food to be considered a whole grain, the entire grain seed must be included in the product.

Whole grains offer unique health benefits that refined grains do not. Studies show that eating whole grains lowers the risk of several chronic diseases including heart disease, type 2 diabetes, asthma, inflammatory disease, gum disease and colorectal cancer.

September is Whole Grains Month, and the perfect time to incorporate whole grains into your diet. To get started, consider purchasing products advertised as 100 percent *whole grain*, *whole wheat* or *stoneground whole*.

### DID YOU KNOW

The following are generally considered examples of whole grains when consumed in a form that includes the entire kernel:

- Amaranth
- Buckwheat
- Millet
- Quinoa
- Rye
- Teff
- Wheat
- Barley
- Corn
- Oats
- Rice
- Sorghum
- Triticale
- Wild rice



## Five Weight-loss Roadblocks

Think you're doing everything right with your diet, but still not dropping any pounds? One of the dieting obstacles below might be to blame. Avoid these five weight-loss roadblocks on the path to a healthier you:

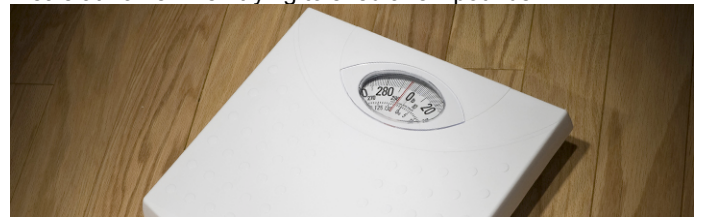
**Stress:** When you're stressed out, your body releases a hormone that causes you to crave fatty, sugary foods. Avoid stress and you might be able to resist dessert.

**Unhealthy "healthy" foods:** Labels such as "all natural" and "fat-free" can be misleading and may not tell the whole story. Make sure you check the nutritional facts to see exactly what you're eating.

**Not enough sleep:** Too little time spent asleep may keep your body from producing hormones that regulate your appetite, causing you to overeat. To keep your diet on track, make sure you're getting at least six to eight hours of sleep each night.

**Missing a workout:** We all know missing a workout means burning fewer calories, but new research shows that people who skip the gym are more likely to give in to temptation when it comes to their diet.

**Eating out:** Most restaurants are concerned with how your food tastes, not your waistline. Because restaurant foods tend to have more calories, sodium and fat, consider cooking more meals at home when trying to shed a few pounds.



## Six Household Remedies

The next time you or your loved ones come down with a cold or other ailment, consider rushing to your pantry instead of the nearest drug store. The following six commonly used household ingredients are great for treating minor illnesses and saving you a few dollars in the process. As always, use your judgment when deciding whether or not to seek professional medical help.

**Honey:** A spoonful of this wonder-ingredient will not only help to ease a sore throat, but applying it directly to a minor burn and covering with a bandage can serve as an antibiotic and speed healing times.

**Oatmeal:** Not just a nutritious breakfast, oatmeal can be used to soothe a rash or irritated skin. Create a poultice by putting cooked, cooled oatmeal in a cotton cloth and applying to the affected area, or steep uncooked oatmeal in a warm bath to treat the entire body.

**Toothpaste:** The next time you or a loved one is stung by a bee, consider reaching for a tube of toothpaste. Just a dab of toothpaste on a bee sting can quickly relieve the irritation.

**Baking soda:** This versatile ingredient soothes sunburn when added to a lukewarm bath, relieves the itching from insect bites when added to a cool bath, and can relieve an upset stomach when half a teaspoon of it is dissolved in a glass of water.

**Olive oil:** This common cooking ingredient can soothe an earache for most adults. Put two to four drops of warm oil in your ear to lessen the pain until you can contact a medical professional.

**Ginger:** For hundreds of years, ginger has been used to combat nausea and upset stomachs. Simply steep a 1-inch slice of this root in hot water and drink to ease a bellyache.

## Hearty Lentil Chili

As summer fades into fall, welcome the start of soup season with a tasty bowl of lentil chili! This easy recipe is great for a dinner at home or shared with friends at a party.

½ pound extra lean ground beef  
1½ cups onion, chopped  
1 clove garlic, crushed  
2 cups cooked, drained lentils  
1 can (29 ounces) tomatoes, diced or crushed  
1 tablespoon chili powder  
½ teaspoon ground cumin

In a large saucepan, brown beef over medium-high heat, breaking it into bite-sized pieces. Drain the fat and reduce to medium heat. Add the onion and garlic, cooking on medium heat until softened. Reduce heat and add cooked lentils, tomatoes, chili powder and cumin. Cook on low heat for about one hour until flavors are blended. Serve with your favorite toppings.

Yield: 6 servings. Serving size: 1 cup. Each serving provides 210 calories, 4.5g total fat, 1.5g saturated fat, 16g protein and 470mg sodium.

Source: [www.choosemyplate.gov](http://www.choosemyplate.gov)

