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Kids' Lunches

Schools have either begun or are about to begin after Labor Day, so let's stick to our topic from last week, kids and food.

School lunches have been in the headlines. In a recently published study, researchers compared the amounts of fruits and vegetables kids put on their trays and ate before and after the National School Lunch Program rules mandated every student should eat more fruits and vegetables. The headlines suggested that kids took more, ate less, and threw away more. Sounds bad? They took 0.20 cups more fruits and vegetables (about 24 blueberries), ate 0.06 cups less (about 7 blueberries), and wasted 0.14 cups more: about 17 blueberries. C'mon, people! Kids should be eating five to seven servings of fruits and vegetables per day; one serving of fruits and vegetables is generally a half cup to a cup. The results of the study may be statistically significant but are meaningless in the real world.

Maybe the problem stems from the way the food is prepared and presented to kids in school lunches. Recently, Time Magazine online reposted an article from a food and wine website called FWx (2) with pictures of [school lunches from around the world](#). The company that put it together, Sweet Greens, stressed that these were examples of school lunches based on government standards for school lunch programs, regional cuisine and food culture, and photos shared online by students. Take a look at what kids eat around the world.

This is not easy, folks. I don't have a simple solution for you other than this: if you want your children to eat better in school, fix their lunch yourself or get involved in your school lunch program to make sure it's the best for your kids. Damn the government regulations and corporate influences—your kids deserve a shot at good nutrition.



What are you prepared to do today?

Dr. Chet

References:

1. Public Health Reports. 2015; September–October. 130:453-457.
2. http://www.foodandwine.com/fw/food/what-school-lunches-around-world-look?xid=PS_time

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