

Keeping Kids Healthy When Traveling 7/13/20

Traveling is an especially stressful time for children – new places, new faces and, oftentimes, new foods. Stress can lower our body's ability to fight off germs. Give your child (and your vacation) a fighting chance by packing healthful, nutritious food that will help your child fight off the inevitable germs from the guy sneezing in the airplane seat ahead of you.

For Car Travel

Fill a cooler with plenty of ice packs and bottles of water and 100% juice to keep your child hydrated. Cheese sticks, yogurt tubes, blueberries and grapes are easily transportable and can stay fresh and cool for up to eight hours in a well insulated, chilled cooler. These items can also fill in for a meal in a pinch when Grandma has her heart set on the Liver and Onions Palace and you're not sure the menu will have anything that will appeal to your child. Other good snacks that do not require any cooling are dried fruit, bananas, apples, granola bars, and trail/snack mixes. Make an easy combination of all your child's favorite snack bits (mini cheese crackers, raisins, pretzel bits, dried cereal, etc.). I do not recommend chocolate pieces as it is inevitable that chocolate bits will end up crammed into the seats and onto your new favorite white jeans! For longer trips, consider packing peanut or almond butter, jelly and a loaf of bread and a few plastic knives for spreading. Finding a park or a rest stop with a picnic table and a grassy area can help you refuel and give your child a chance to run around after being cooped up in the car for so long.

For Airplane Travel

Security is getting even stricter at the airports and fewer items are allowed through. Skip the cooler bag altogether but be sure to pack an empty sippy or reusable cup and pick up some bottles of water once you're through security to be sure everyone in your party is well-hydrated. Dehydration can cause exhaustion and crankiness which can quickly curtail the fun. Fresh fruits and trail mix packs are often available at airport kiosks and can be a lifesaver when you are unexpectedly stuck on the tarmac for an extra hour or two. Be sure to pack stickers and other small items to keep your child entertained. Having food available for regular meals and snack times is great but try not to rely solely on snacks to keep your child occupied so that a sore tummy doesn't await you upon arrival.

Safe Travels!