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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Wednesday, October 5, 1932.

FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY

Subject: "Lunch for the School Child." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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No matter how I try, time just will get ahead of me every now and then. This morning I took a glance at my calendar and realized to my horror that school days arrived weeks ago and that we hadn't had one chat together about the lunches the youngsters were eating at noontime.

Many school boys and girls eat their noon meal at school. Some of them carry their lunch from home. Some of them buy it at the school cafeteria. But, however they get it, this is an important meal, well worth thinking about. As every wise mother knows food has a lot to do with a child's health, with his class marks and with his general success at the business of getting an education.

If your youngster buys his meal every day at noon, he ought to understand early what food to select and why. And he ought to understand that selecting the right dishes is his responsibility. Both teachers and parents can help get this idea over to the children.

The other day I happened to stop in at a little shop near a big city high school. It was noon and the shop was full of children spending their lunch money for soft drinks, candy, pie, pickles, doughnuts and lollypops, - money that ought to have been going for milk, vegetable soups, fruits and other simple foods that those children need for growing and keeping fit.

When I got home I told Uncle Ebenezer what I had seen. He said those youngsters ought to learn one of his favorite poems called "Keep Your Own Machinery Fit."

Do you remember it? No? Shall I take a minute off and repeat it?

You know the model of your car,
You know just what its powers are,
You treat it with a lot of care,
Nor tax it more than it will bear.
But for self--that's different,
Your mechanism may be bent,
Your carbureter gone to grass,
Your engine just a rusty mass.
Your wheels may wobble and your cogs.
Be handed over to the dogs;
And you skip and skid and slide
Without a thought of things inside,
What fools, indeed, we mortals are
To lavish care upon a car
With ne'er a bit of time to see
About our own machinery!

That's the verse for the children who must choose their own menu. Now about the child who brings his lunch from home. What shall he have to eat?

Nutrition specialists say that growing children have special needs in the way of food, - milk, eggs, butter, fruits and vegetables. They not only need special foods but they also need foods served so attractively so that they appeal to young appetites when they come out of the lunch box at noon.

So here are some suggestions for pleasing school lunches worked out by specialists on feeding children.

They suggest first that you don't try to have too many kinds of food in one lunch. If you include too many foods in one lunch, then variety from day to day is difficult to manage.

Sandwiches are one of the best foods for lunches. They are of many kinds, and are easy to prepared, easy to carry, and always well liked. Use day-old bread for the children's sandwiches. To add variety you can vary the kinds of bread, sometimes using nut bread, rasin bread, brown bread, white bread, rolls or biscuits. Good fillings are too numerous to list but they include chopped or shredded fresh vegetables with salad dressing, chopped eggs, chopped meat, cottage or cream cheese, chopped dried fruits, crisp bacon, jelly, marmalade, and so on.

Without a fruit, preferably a juicy fruit, the lunch would be dry - monotonous. An orange, an apple or a ripe banana will carry easily in a lunch box. By the way, a tomato makes a good substitute for an orange. Or you can put cooked fruits in the lunch. Pack them in a covered jelly glass or in a small screw-top jar. A screw top jar or paper/^{cup}with a paper cap will hold chopped raw vegetables like lettuce or cabbage.

Cookies are another lunch box staple. For the person who is putting up the lunch, cookies have one advantage over sandwiches. You can make them in quantity and keep them for several days. A cooky jar filled weekly is a great aid from day to day in preparing the school lunch. Other good simple sweets are cake, gingerbread, wafers, zweibach, dried fruits, baked custard and simple candy, - one or two pieces for eating last.

The lucky child has a little thermos bottle that fits in his lunch box and keeps his milk cold until noon, - or his milk soup or cocoa hot.

Now some suggestions about packing the box, - a very important matter, by the way. The way that lunch looks at noon may make all the difference between whether Johnny eats the food he needs or throws it out.

The big secret of successful packing is to keep all flavors separate and to prevent the foods from being mashed. Put in a surprise now and then such as a stuffed egg, celery stuffed with cheese, or a salad.

Wax paper, paraffin cups or cartons, glass jars and glasses with closely fitting lids all help keep flavors separate. You'll want to wrap each sandwich, each cookie or cake, in fact each article of food separately in wax paper. Put the heavy things in at the bottom of the box. If the lunch box is a good convenient one with a handle the child will always carry it in the same position and you can pack it accordingly. Include paper napkins and drinking cups, and perhaps an extra paper napkin for spreading on the desk.

Both cleanliness and daintiness help make that lunch tempting. When the box comes home after school each day, it needs scalding and sunning to keep it sweet.

Now where's your pencil? Is it handy so you can write this school-lunch menu? All right.

A meat sandwich made with a thin slice of meat loaf with lettuce and salad dressing between slices of day-old bread. Then, a vegetable sandwich made of finely chopped cabbage or finely grated carrot seasoned with salt and pepper or salad dressing between slices of whole wheat bread. Next, milk, bought at the school or carried in a small thermos bottle. Hot cocoa makes a good beverage when the weather is cooler.

For dessert, you might pack an individual baked custard or rice and raisin pudding in a paper container with a fitted lid or a jolly glass with a tight lid. With it, two cookies will go very nicely.

Then you might add a shiny red apple, a bunch of grapes or a firm tomato for eating at recess.

Now let's be sure you have this menu from first to last. I'll review it briefly. Meat loaf and lettuce sandwich with white bread; chopped cabbage or carrot sandwich with whole wheat bread; Milk to drink or hot cocoa; Baked custard, or rice and raisin pudding; Two small cookies; and for recess a red apple, grapes or a firm tomato.

Tomorrow, we'll talk about lighting the house.

