

In brainstorming ideas for this month's nutrition letter I came across this article on the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics website. Seemed just perfect, enjoy!

Have a Healthy St. Patrick's Day Party

Capitalize on this holiday's themes and serve up a fun, celebratory and nutritious spread. "St. Patrick's Day is a festive opportunity to make healthy eating fun for kids," says Angela Lemond, RD, CSP, LD, spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Make positive food memories this St. Patrick's Day by teaching your kids that eating healthy is fun.

Go with Green

"Green-themed St. Patrick's Day is the perfect opportunity to get kids interested in eating green produce, which is packed with all kinds of nutrients," says Karen Ansel, MS, RD. Try these green options.

- Ansel suggests making green edamame dip for a protein- and folate-packed snack. Puree the steamed and shelled edamame beans with olive oil, lime juice and cilantro. Then, serve the dip with crisp green vegetables, such as

cucumber slices or snap peas.

- Cut green bell peppers crosswise near the pointed end to make Shamrock-shaped slices, suggests Lemond. Make "Shamrock Mini Pizzas" by spreading pizza sauce and cheese over split English muffins. Place one bell pepper slice on each mini pizza, and bake until the cheese melts.
- For a main dish, try tossing cooked whole grain pasta with pesto and green peas.

Try a Rainbow Theme

Serve a variety of fruits and vegetables of all colors for a dose of vitamins and minerals.

- Deanna Segrave-Daly, RD, suggests a Rainbow Smoothie Sampler. Blend up a batch of smoothies of each color of the rainbow, and pour into mini paper cups. Arrange the cups in the shape of a rainbow, and let the kids "taste the rainbow."
- Lemond recommends making a rainbow fruit platter by arranging strawberries, orange segments, kiwi, blueberries and purple

grapes in the shape of a rainbow. Place a small bowl of pineapple chunks at each end of the rainbow to serve as the "pot 'o gold."

Irish Potato Celebration

Potatoes are packed with healthy vitamins, minerals and fiber. Go with the Irish theme of the holiday, and try these potato dishes.

- Serve up a healthy potato soup. Substitute fat-free evaporated milk in place of heavy cream to reduce the fat in this creamy, comforting dish.
- Angela Ginn, RD, LDN, CDE, spokesperson for the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, suggests whipping up creamy mashed potatoes using low-fat milk, light sour cream and chives. Serve as a side dish or use as a topping for a traditional Shepherd's Pie prepared with lean ground beef.

Monthly challenge:

Teenage Athlete- Enjoy healthy foods, even healthy foods can be party foods. Be creative!

Parents – Enjoy healthy foods, even healthy foods can be party foods. Be creative!