

# Food Trends

## Nurturing Healthy Minds & Bodies in K-12 Texas Schools

Published by ECI Management Group

### The skinny on Obesity

Obesity is affecting children regardless of age, race or religion. Obesity occurs in over 1/3 of all children and adolescents in the United States according to The Center of Disease Control and Prevention.

What's the difference between being over weight and obese? Overweight is defined as having excess body weight for a particular height from fat, muscle, bone, water, or a combination of these factors. Obesity is defined as having excess body fat.

Obese individuals have the potential to suffer both immediate and long term effects on health and well-being.

Some effects on obese youth are;

\*They are more likely to have risk factors for cardiovascular disease, such as high cholesterol or high blood pressure. In a population-based sample of 5- to 17-year-olds, 70% of obese youth had at least one risk factor for cardiovascular disease.

\*Obese adolescents are more likely to have pre-diabetes,

\*Children and adolescents who are obese are at greater risk for bone and joint problems, sleep apnea, and social and psychological problems such as stigmatization and poor self-esteem.

So how can we help prevent Obesity in our children?

Lifestyle habits, including healthy eating and

physical activity, can lower the risk of becoming obese.

The dietary and physical activity behaviors of children and adolescents are influenced by many sectors of society, including families, communities, schools, faith-based institutions, government agencies, the media, and entertainment industries.

Schools play a particularly critical role by establishing supportive environment with practices and choices that support healthy behaviors.

Schools also provide opportunities for students to learn about and practice healthy eating and physical activity behaviors.

### An Apple a day... Pumpkins they are not just for carving

When it comes to pumpkins, most people think of Pie or Jack-o-lanterns, but pumpkins are a great fall fruit (yes fruit) to add to your menu.

Pumpkins are loaded with vitamin A and beta carotene. Both vitamin A and beta carotene promote healthy eyes and skin and help protect against infection.

A diet rich in fruits and vegetables that contain beta carotene helps to defend the body against some cancers. Foods that are leafy and dark green, or deep orange and yellow, such as pumpkins, carrots, spinach, red-leaf lettuce, cantaloupe, squash, mangoes and sweet potatoes are good sources of vitamins A and beta carotene.

Fresh pumpkin season is from September to November. However, canned pumpkin is available all year. My Pyramid suggests that adults eat 2½ cups of vegetables a day

#### Did you know?

Pumpkins originated in Central America. The oldest evidence, pumpkin-related seeds dating between 7000 and 5500 BC, were found in Mexico.

Native Americans dried strips of pumpkin and wove them into mats. They also roasted long strips of pumpkin on the open fire and ate them.

The origin of pumpkin pie occurred when the colonists sliced off the pumpkin top, removed the seeds, and filled the insides with milk, spices and honey. The pumpkin was then baked in hot ashes.

Pumpkins, and their seeds, were a celebrated food of the Native American Indians who treasured them both for their dietary and medicinal properties.



### Educate not Legislate

The Texas Based ECI Management Group has taken a unique step to help fight obesity in their schools.

ECI is not only providing a wide variety of food options for their students and faculty, but they are also getting the students involved and educated them in what they are eating so they can learn to make the right choices for themselves.

Chef \_\_\_ of \_\_\_ says " I have found if you get the students interested in the food they are eating, active in their food choices and educate them on the effects of their decisions they make, good or bad, they are more eager and open to try new healthier things" "We make eating fun and a learning experience".

Frank Ricupati CEO of ECI Management group agrees "we want to educate not legislate, and so far the students have be very receptive to this approach".

### Doing your part to keep the flu out

Educators and staff can help slow the spread of the flu in their schools by Encourage children, parents, and staff to take the following everyday preventive actions

1. Stay home when you are sick if possible, You will help prevent others from catching your illness.
2. Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. If a tissue is not available, cover your mouth and nose with your sleeve, not your hand.
3. Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze.
4. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread this way.
5. Disinfect surfaces frequently, especially when someone is ill.

Influenza causes more hospitalizations among young children than any other vaccine-preventable disease. The single best way to protect against the flu and its potential complications is everyone to get an influenza vaccine each year. Making healthy choices at school and at home can help prevent the flu and spreading flu to others.

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## “OUT OF THE OVEN”

### Pumpkin Magic Bars

25 Gingersnaps	1/4 cup coconut
2 tablespoons sugar	1/4 cup toffee bits
5 tablespoons butter, melted	1/2 cup sweetened condensed milk
1 cup white chocolate chips	1/4 cup pumpkin puree
1 cup chopped pecans	1/2 teaspoon pumpkin pie spice

1. Preheat oven to 350F. Line a 9x9” pan with foil and spray with cooking spray.
2. Grind gingersnaps to a fine crumb in a food processor.
3. Mix with sugar and melted butter.
4. Press into prepared pan
5. Sprinkle white chocolate chips, pecans, coconut, and toffee over the top of the crust.
6. Whisk pumpkin, sweetened condensed milk and pumpkin spice in a small bowl and pour over top of bars
7. Bake for 29-31 minutes, until the edges have started to brown. Cool completely before cutting

