

## **Back-to-School Health Tips: HSHS Illinois Offers Sleep And Nutrition Tips For Family**

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Back-to-school may be a bit different this year, but some things never change. Children need to create good sleep and nutrition habits whether headed back to the classroom or learning from home at the kitchen table.

The HSHS Illinois hospitals of HSHS St. John's Hospital in Springfield; HSHS St. Mary's Hospital in Decatur; HSHS St. Francis Hospital in Litchfield; HSHS Good Shepherd Hospital in Shelbyville; HSHS St. Elizabeth's Hospital in O'Fallon, HSHS St. Anthony's Memorial Hospital in Effingham; HSHS Holy Family Hospital in Greenville, and HSHS St. Joseph's Hospitals in Breese and Highland are offering these tips to help your kids get a good night's sleep and healthy nourishment.

When attempting to start a healthy sleep schedule with your child, set his or her bedtime incrementally earlier, eventually settling on the times that work best for their schooling. Once sleep schedules have been established, stick to it. Consistency is key. Don't encourage your kids to sleep in or go to bed late on the weekends.

Other tips include limiting time with electronics such as video games, television, cell phones or tablets. These items stimulate the brain and are not conducive of good sleep.

“Parents should be a role model,” said Dr. Brock Phillips, HSHS Medical Group pediatrician. “Set a good example for your children by creating your own sleep schedule and you may just see the benefits as well.”

Another way parents can set a good example is through healthy eating habits. Get your kids involved, make a list of foods they like to eat and work together to make a food plan. Start with proteins and teach your children about the different options such as chicken, turkey, ham, string cheese, nuts, peanut butter and eggs. Pair those items with a few healthy sides such as cut up vegetables, whole or sliced fruit, yogurt or cottage cheese. Give them a treat with options like pretzels, trail mix with a few M & M's, small bag of chips or pudding.

Besides these tips, you can also try the rainbow packing idea. This works well with younger kids as you base lunches on colors. Very simply, you could choose the following routine:

**Monday** = Red foods, such as apples, radishes and dried cranberries

**Tuesday** = Orange foods, such as clementines, oranges and carrots

**Wednesday** = Yellow foods, such as bananas, yellow peppers, pears, string cheese and hard-boiled eggs

**Thursday** = Green foods, such as salad, broccoli with dip, avocado and guacamole

**Friday** = Blue/purple foods, such as purple grapes, plums and blueberries

As we continue to live through an unprecedented pandemic don't forget to prioritize your child's health whether her or she is back in school or learning from home.

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