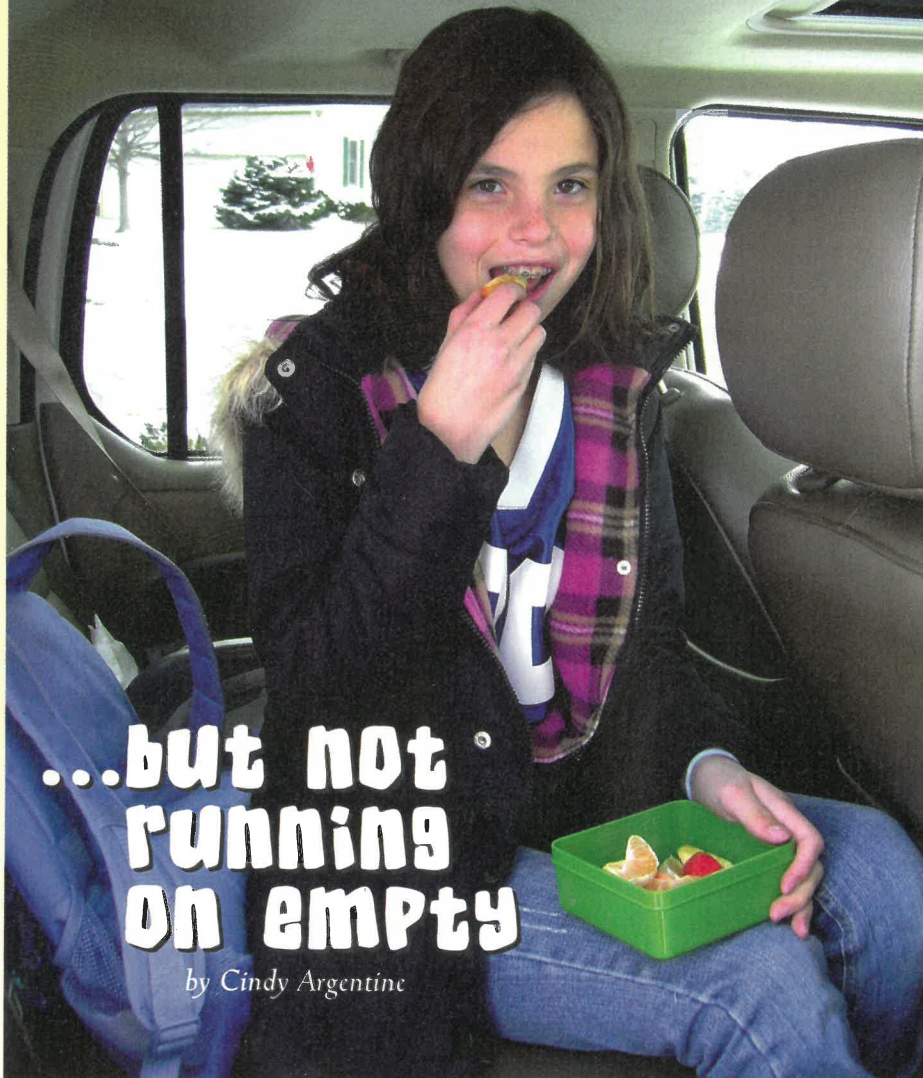


ON THE RUN



...but not
running
on empty

by Cindy Argentine

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IDS ARE BUSY. Eating takes time. How can you eat well while still getting to school, band, and soccer practice? Let's take a look at how some kids in America are managing this.

I Hear the Bus!

For Michael, 14, the bus comes at 7:07 a.m. Lunch isn't until 12:30 p.m. "I need a lot for breakfast," he says. He likes eggs — hard-boiled, fried, or scrambled — with toast and orange juice. "If we aren't having eggs, Mom makes me eat a handful of walnuts with my oatmeal, or she'll give me some Greek yogurt and honey. She also gives me fruit, like pineapple chunks or a banana. Sometimes I'm running out the door as I finish!"

"My mom has a snack for me in th

Megan, 16, heads to high school at 7:30. She likes oatmeal or a bagel with peanut butter for breakfast, but doesn't always have time for that. "Sometimes I wake up late, like this morning, actually!" she says. "I had to grab a bag of frosted shredded wheat and a juice box to have when I got to school."

Snacking After School

Connie, 10, gets a ride straight from school to piano lessons once a week. "My mom has a snack for me in the car when she picks me up from school. It could be fruit, a piece of cheese, or some peanut-butter pretzels."

To learn more about after-school snacking, I checked in with a sixth-grade class that has an early lunchtime (11:30 a.m.). Some of these kids are ravenous after school! I asked them to list three of the foods they eat most often when they get home. First-place answer? Fruit! Students listed apples, oranges, bananas, and pears. Second-place? Candy. (It was early November when I surveyed them, shortly after a certain candy-filled holiday.) Milk and cookies tied for third.

My Practice Is at Dinnertime

Supper-time sports can make dinner complicated. If you've got brothers or sisters, or you play several sports, your family might have an activity on the calendar every night at dinnertime. The problem: Kids need to power up before practice, but they don't want a big meal right before strenuous exercise. The solution: Have a heavy snack or

me in the car when she picks me up from school.”

— Connie, 10

simple, small meal after school, and then eat again after the practice.

Calvin, 12, often faces this situation. He and his brother Ross both play several sports, along with their two sisters. Calvin says, “I eat stuff with a lot of carbs before practice. I’ll make a bagel with cream cheese, or a small sandwich like turkey and mayo on a toasted bagel.” He has dinner with his family when he gets home. “We usually eat on the late side, like 7, 8, or 9 p.m.,” he adds.

Think Ahead

When you’re rushed and hungry, the easiest things to grab are pre-packaged snacks like cookies, candy, and chips. But those foods don’t always give you the nutrition — complex carbs,

healthy fats, protein, and vitamins — that your body needs.

Megan fits nutrition into her active days by packing her own lunches. “At high school there are so many options for lunch, and it’s not as structured as at middle or elementary school, so people don’t always choose healthy stuff. Some friends of mine have nacho chips and cheese every day.” She usually packs a sandwich (peanut butter and jelly or turkey), fruit, cheese or yogurt, and maybe carrots or cucumber slices. “I was really into sugar snap peas for a while,” she laughs. Her best time-saving tip? Take advantage of Mom or Dad’s hard work the night before: “Sometimes I take leftovers, like this pasta Mom makes with basil pesto, snow peas, green onions, red peppers, and cheese — it’s my favorite thing ever to take to school.”

When I asked Megan why she thought nutrition mattered, she had this to say: “High school is like the basis for your eating habits in college, when your parents aren’t there to tell you what to do. I think a lot of people just forget about it, because they’re focused on practice, school, tests.” But she thinks it’s important. “High school is a time when people are growing,” she says. “When they have healthy eating habits, that really sets them up for good lifestyles for the rest of their life.”

Antioxidant
— Chemical
substance that
inhibits
oxidation

Cindy Argentine, a frequent *ODYSSEY* contributor, has plenty of practice juggling mealtime with her three children’s activities.



Our Snack Survey

The table below lists what one sixth-grade class has been eating after school, with responses organized by specific food group. Each student provided one to five answers when asked what they usually eat for an after-school snack. (Some listed two or more things together as one item, like “apple with peanut butter,” but those are listed separately here.) How do their choices compare to your own?

DAIRY (7 TOTAL)

Cheese	1
Milk	6

FRUITS AND VEGGIES (23 TOTAL)

Carrots	1
Fruit	
(apple, orange, banana, pear)	16
Juice or cider	5
Veggie straws	1

GRAINS (22 TOTAL)

Cereal	1
Chips	5
Crackers (cheese, graham)	4
Granola bar	5
Popcorn	5
Pretzels	2

COMBINATIONS (6 TOTAL)

“Masala” burger	
(veggies and grains)	1
Pasta	
(ravioli, macaroni and cheese)	3
Pizza	2

MEATS/PROTEIN (4 TOTAL)

Beef jerky	1
Peanut butter	3

SWEETS (20 TOTAL)

Candy	8
Cookies	6
Ice cream	2
Popsicle	1
Soda	3

ACTIVITY TO DISCOVER

1, 2, 3... DELICIOUS!

Here’s some fast food that you can make yourself. (Check with your parents before using the oven!)

Spicy Mini-Pizzas

1. Spread jarred tomato pasta sauce on whole-grain English muffin or bagel halves.
2. Sprinkle with shredded mozzarella cheese, lots of dried oregano (which is packed with **antioxidants!**), and, if you really like it hot, some red pepper flakes. You could also add your favorite veggies, like sliced olives or diced bell peppers.
3. Toast in toaster oven or bake in regular oven a few minutes until cheese melts and slightly browns.