Solid School Lunches

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At the cafeteria, your child may stand face to face with fast food and sugary treats. But you can teach her to make healthier choices.

EXPLAIN YOUR REASONING
Saturday morning TV commercials only tell half the story. Excess sugar and fat put kids at risk for obesity. Sugar can cause tooth decay; oil can exacerbate acne; and the salt and fat in fried foods can lead to heart and blood pressure problems.

GIVE SOME GUIDELINES
Encourage kids to avoid fried or buttery food. Steer them toward water and 100% fruit juice and away from sugary soft drinks and fruit punches.

OFFER SOME OPTIONS
Pretzels and apple slices are better than chips. Milk (especially low-fat) is better than soda. Suggest replacing the soda and fries with yogurt, applesauce and mandarin oranges.

SHOW WHAT YOU KNOW
Go to a fast-food outlet with kids and show them that a small burger, salad and water can be satisfying without the fries, soda and high-fat condiments like mayonnaise, sour cream and guacamole.

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