

“What’s wrong with a cupcake?”

Usually foods for school parties include cupcakes, candy, cookies and soda. So what’s the problem? There is nothing wrong with an occasional treat, but unhealthy choices have become the norm rather than the exception. Parties, treats used as classroom rewards, food fundraisers, and snacks constantly expose children to high-fat, high-sugar, low-nutrient choices. In a normal school day an average school aged child could get 5 or 6 unhealthy “treats”.

Obesity rates among children are rising, which causes very serious health problems like diabetes, high blood pressure and joint problems. Giving children foods low in nutrients on a regular basis makes it difficult for them to learn how to make healthy food choices. By giving students nutritious choices wherever food is available (including the classroom), it is possible to positively influence children’s eating habits. A few of the benefits of having healthy celebrations are that healthy kids learn better, it creates excitement about nutrition, and it promotes positive lifestyle choices.

Birthday and holiday parties at school provide a chance to help make healthy eating fun and exciting for children. We know that schools should provide food that gives kids a positive nutrition message. Schools can take advantage of classroom parties to serve food that tastes good, is nutritious, and provides students with an opportunity for nutrition education experiences.