



Courtesy of Dr. Yvonne Sanders-Butler

Nutrition

HEALTHY LIVING

Tips from internationally renowned author and healthy lifestyle advocate Dr. Yvonne Sanders-Butler on preparing nutritious dishes after the holidays

BY LESLIE E. ROYAL

In 1999, Dr. Yvonne Sanders-Butler, a former elementary school principal, created the first sugar free school in the United States. Known as “Healthy Kids, Smart Kids: The Sugar Free Zone”, she implemented the program in Fulton County, Georgia, a district with 20,000 students.

Additionally, she has partnered with organizations such as Morehouse Medical

School, Tuskegee University, Jackson State University, Health and Human Services (HHS), National Institute of Child Human Development (NICHD), Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Institute of Medicine (IOM), and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) to bring awareness to healthy eating.

As author of *Naturally Yours and More Gourmet Desserts, Desserts Lovers' Choice*

(a healthy approach to desserts) and *Healthy Kids, Smart Kids*, she believes that “to be healthy, you have to live healthy.” As such, as we embark on a New Year, **upscale** asked Dr. Butler to share the importance of eating healthy foods after a holiday season of rich, high-calorie cuisine.

Why is it important to find a healthy alternative to rich holiday foods?

Approximately 70% of Americans are already overweight or obese. Nearly one in every two African Americans are overweight or obese. (49.6%) We have lost and are losing so many of our loved ones to obesity and the diseases that it causes like diabetes, heart disease, cancer, and high blood pressure due to our unhealthy diets and sedentary lifestyles. Americans are expected to gain at least 5 to 12 pounds this holiday season from all of our beloved family recipes that have been passed down for generations. We are passing down these unhealthy habits to our children and grandchildren.

Why is it important to eat meals high in protein and fiber? Both help to maintain a healthy diet. Protein helps to repair our tissues and muscles and fiber is important for our digestive health as it helps to regulate how the body uses sugar. When eaten together at a meal or snack, it makes you feel fuller quicker, and it also can help to burn off fat.

Nutritionists encourage us to have a balanced diet. Why is that important?

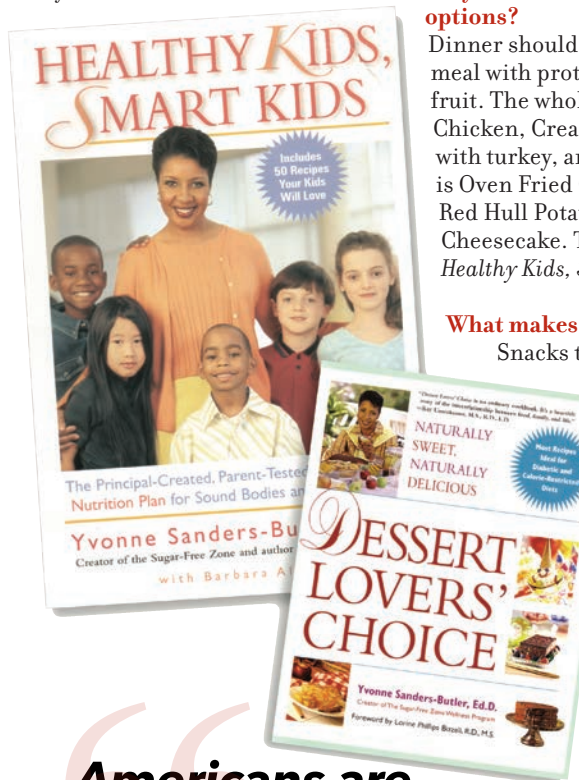
A balanced diet provides us all the nutrients we need for our body to function properly.

What should we eat for breakfast?

Breakfast is the most important meal of the day. Healthy proteins may include eggs, Egg Beaters, turkey bacon, veggie sausage, or veggie omelet. And do not forget your healthy carbohydrates that include whole grains such as steel oatmeal with fruit and nuts, whole grain breads, and whole grain cereal with soy, almond, or skim milk.

What is an example of what would make for a healthy lunch?

A lunch with protein, grain, vegetables, and fruit can begin with a vegetable-based soup that features beans for a great protein boost and lots of healthy fiber. Also include sandwiches on fresh whole grain bread with lean meats, canned fish (tuna and salmon), vegetarian spreads like hummus, or natural peanut butter. Other options are fresh salads, fresh fruit, and yogurt.



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Can you share some healthy dinner options?

Dinner should be a festive but balanced meal with protein, grain, vegetables, and fruit. The whole family will love Almond Chicken, Creamy Cauliflower and Potatoes with turkey, and Watergate salad. Another is Oven Fried Chicken, Squash Casserole, Red Hull Potato Salad, and Chocolate Silk Cheesecake. These are recipes from my *Healthy Kids, Smart Kids* book.

What makes for great healthy snacks?

Snacks that make the brain and body work like cereal trail mix, celery and raisin butter, Baked Lemon Pepper Wings, and spicy popcorn.

Why is water important?

You cannot survive without water. It makes up two-thirds of your total body weight. Our most precious organs and tissues are mainly water. It has no calories and increases clarity.

What type of snacks curb afternoon cravings?

Homemade Veggie or Turkey Pizza Slices, Cauliflower Spinach Pizza, Baby Carrots and Blue Cheese Dip, and Organic Fruit Juice Popsicles are good snacks.

Why should we limit sugary foods like candy, and what would we replace it with?

Sugary foods like candy have no health benefits to consumers. It provides empty calories that cause weight gain, and it also lowers the immune system. Here are some satisfying substitutes for traditional snacks. Eat fruit leather instead of a candy bar, granola bar instead of cookies, and a small bagel topped with fruit spread instead of a jelly donut.

You can follow Yvonne Sanders-Butler, Ed.D. on Instagram @ysb8183, Twitter @YvonneSButler, and Facebook @HealthyKidsSmartKids.