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Nutrition Expert Offers the ABCs and 123s of Healthy Back-to-School Snacking
*Incorporating healthy fare like California Raisins in snacks boosts nutrient intake
and provides fuel for an A+ year!*

FRESNO, Calif. (August 21, 2012) – As children across the country head back to the classroom, parents will likely hear a familiar refrain each afternoon: *“I’m hungry.”* It is officially after-school snacking season! With research from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill indicating that children consume a quarter of their daily calories from snacks, it’s important to make sure that after-school goodies are truly good for them, too.

“Think of your child’s afternoon school snack as his or her fourth meal,” says Christine M. Palumbo, registered dietitian, mom and a nutrition advisor for California Raisins. “As a mini-meal, healthy after-school snacks can provide needed energy to sustain grumbling tummies until dinnertime.”

For easy and healthy snacking ideas, Palumbo shares the following five tips:

1. **Pack your own.** At the beginning of the week, assemble nibbles such as whole grain crackers, unsalted nuts and no-added sugar dried fruit into small containers or bags. You’ll save time and money by preparing these easily accessible snacks in advance.
2. **Focus on fruits and veggies.** Create tasty grab bags by mixing raisins with cherry tomatoes, baby carrots, grapes, sugar snap peas or celery sticks.
3. **Make an inside-out sandwich.** Spread low-fat cream cheese on a slice of deli turkey and wrap it around a sesame breadstick.
4. **Subtract the sugar.** Rather than fruited yogurt, which can contain more than 20 grams of sugar (5 teaspoons) per six-ounce container, take plain Greek yogurt and top with chopped walnuts, a light drizzle of honey and a sprinkle of naturally sweet California raisins.
5. **Involve the kids!** If the kids make their own healthy snacks, chances are they’ll be more likely to eat them, too! For a fun snack activity, try these California Raisin Peanut Butter Roll Ups: grab a tortilla, spread a light layer of peanut butter, dot with California raisins and fold into a roll.

Palumbo adds that after-school snacks are a great opportunity to increase consumption of fruits and vegetables to help children meet their daily nutrient needs.

“Instead of highly processed snack foods, consider offering your child a half sandwich on whole-

grain bread, along with some dried fruit,” says Palumbo. “For example, adding California raisins to your child’s diet will deliver nutrients such as potassium and antioxidants along with fiber.”

Earlier this year research from the University of Toronto revealed that snacking on raisins may help control hunger in children, an added benefit for weeknight evenings when dinner is delayed due to soccer practice, band rehearsal or other after-school activities. The study showed that among children, eating raisins as an after-school snack prevents excessive calorie intake and increases satiety – or feeling of fullness – as compared to other commonly consumed snacks.

California raisins are all-natural, fat- and cholesterol-free and are ranked number one as the most economical dried fruit by the USDA, making them a delicious snack addition. For more snack ideas visit www.LoveYourRaisins.com.

About the California Raisin Marketing Board

A State Marketing Order in 1998 created the California Raisin Marketing Board and it is 100 percent grower funded. Its mission is to support and promote the increased use of California-grown raisins and sponsor crop production, nutrition and market research. For more information about the California Raisin Marketing Board and to browse delicious recipes, visit LoveYourRaisins.com.

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(Accompanying picture for release)

