

Pack a Healthy Lunch

A healthy lunch provides the fuel your child needs to finish the school day, attend after-school activities and get a head-start on homework before dinner. Pack a balanced lunch by including at least three or four food groups (extra credit for all five). Skip the sugary drinks, including juice, fruit snacks, cookies, and other energy-zapping treats.

Here are some ideas for healthy lunch options:

PROTEIN	WHOLE GRAINS	VEGGIES	FRUITS	DAIRY
Deli chicken or turkey	Whole wheat bread	Baby carrots, celery sticks or sliced cucumbers	Whole fruit such as bananas, apples or oranges	Low-fat milk
Nut butters	Whole wheat tortilla or pita	Veggies on sandwiches, salads or homemade pizza	Fruit canned in water or 100% juice	Low-fat yogurt
Hard-boiled eggs	Whole grain crackers			Low-fat or part-skim cheese (string cheese, cheddar cheese, cottage cheese)
Hummus	Whole grain pasta		Dried fruit	
Leftover baked chicken				

Kid-Approved Lunch Ideas

- Turkey sandwich on whole wheat bread, sliced apple, baby carrots and low-fat milk.
- Pasta salad made with whole grain pasta and fresh veggies, hard-boiled egg, fruit cup and low-fat milk.
- Leftover baked chicken and veggies wrapped in a whole wheat tortilla, a banana, low-fat yogurt and water.
- Fresh sliced veggies with hummus, whole grain crackers, an apple and low-fat milk.

Food Safety Tips

- Use an insulated lunch bag with an ice pack.
- Add a frozen water bottle to the lunch bag to keep foods cool, and the water will still be cold at lunchtime.
- Pack lunch the night before and store it in the refrigerator rather than packing lunch in the morning before school. This will keep it cooler longer.
- Put money in your child's backpack so he can buy a cold skim or low-fat milk at school.