

Pack a Healthy Lunch!

Kids
Can Do
it!



Healthy Lunch Checklist

Include **EACH** of these key ingredients for a healthy lunch:

Fruit

Try apple slices, melon, strawberries, grapes, pears, bananas, kiwi, papaya, mangos.

Veggies

Try bell pepper slices (green, red, orange, or yellow), broccoli, baby carrots, snap peas, zucchini sticks, grape tomatoes, celery, sliced cucumbers, cauliflower.

Protein

Include a low-fat protein such as lean deli meats, grilled skinless chicken, water-packed tuna, turkey, hardboiled eggs, natural peanut or almond butter, 1% cottage cheese.

Dairy or Calcium-Rich Food

Try low-fat or fat-free milk, soy milk, light yogurt, mozzarella cheese sticks, calcium-fortified orange juice.

Whole Grains

Include foods that list a whole grain as the first ingredient on the food label such as whole wheat bread, pita, tortillas, or crackers.

Healthy Lunches Help Kids....

- Stay alert and energetic all day
- Do better in school
- Build healthy bodies
- Ward off illnesses like colds and flu
- Meet a big part of their daily nutritional needs

8 Tips for Getting Kids to Eat a Healthy Lunch

- 1. Include at least one serving of fruit in every lunch.** Try serving fruit in different ways – whole, cut into slices, cubed, or with a low-fat yogurt dipping sauce.
- 2. Use whole grain bread instead of white bread for sandwiches.** Choose breads that list “whole wheat” or “whole grain” as the first ingredient.
- 3. Limit cookies, brownies, chips, and other baked goods.** These are loaded with sugar, unhealthy fats, and calories.
- 4. Sneak in vegetables.** Add vegetables like cucumber slices, green peppers, sliced zucchini, and tomatoes to sandwiches, wraps, and stuffed pitas.
- 5. Encourage kids to choose 1% or fat-free milk.** Milk is a good source of calcium, vitamin D, and protein. Sodas, fruit drinks, kool-aid, and sports drinks are loaded with sugar and calories, and have almost no nutritional value.
- 6. Switch from ham, bologna, salami, and other fatty luncheon meats to low-fat alternatives.** Try low-fat or fat-free turkey breast, chicken breast, roast beef, or water-packed tuna.
- 7. If you pack fruit juice, make sure it's 100% juice.** Fruit juice is rich in vitamins and minerals; however, it is high in calories so limit intake to about 1 cup per day. Watch out for fruit drinks like Sunny Delight, Hi-C, Fruitopia, and Capri Sun - with no more than 10% juice, they're mostly sugar and water masquerading as fruit juice.
- 8. If you pack chips, pack low-fat or baked varieties.** Pack baked chips, pretzels, Cheerios, or whole grain, low-fat crackers instead of potato, corn, tortilla, or other chips.

Yummy Fillings for Sandwiches, Pitas, and Wraps

- Chicken, light mayo, and celery
- Turkey, provolone cheese, and apple slices
- Chicken, pesto, and sun-dried tomatoes
- Canned tuna, dark leaf lettuce, tomatoes, and boiled egg
- Turkey, light mayo, spinach, and grapes
- Black beans, roasted peppers and zucchini, and low-fat cheese
- Apples, raisins, and light cream cheese
- Avocado, tomato, lettuce, and coriander
- Cucumbers, carrots, black olives, chickpeas, sun-dried tomatoes, and feta cheese



Food Safety

- Perishable foods such as dairy products (milk, cheese, yogurt), eggs, meat, fish, chicken, and mayo need to be kept COLD and eaten within about 4 hours of preparation.
- Choose an insulated lunch box or include a frozen freezer pack to keep the lunchbox cool.
- Many foods can be frozen prior to packing, such as sandwiches, yogurt, cheese, cooked meat, peanut butter, and mashed eggs.

Healthy Lunchbox Ideas

West Coast Swing

- 1 California Tortilla Roll Up
 - Top a whole wheat tortilla with lean turkey meat, light cream cheese, avocado, tomato, and dark leaf lettuce. Roll up and cut in half.
- 1 green apple, sliced and smeared with 1 Tbsp natural peanut butter
- 1 cup skim or low-fat milk

South of the Border Celebration

- 1 South of the Border Chicken Pita Pocket (see recipe)
- 1 orange, sliced
- 1 cup skim or low-fat milk

South of the Border Chicken Pita Pockets

- 4 skinless, boneless chicken breasts
- 2 Tbsp olive oil
- 1/2 tsp each of the following spices – garlic powder, onion powder, salt, black pepper, and cayenne pepper
- 4 whole wheat pita pockets
- 2 diced tomatoes
- 2 cups shredded dark leaf lettuce
- 1 sliced avocado
- Salsa

Directions (serves 8): Cut chicken into strips. In a skillet, heat oil and sauté chicken for 3 minutes. Sprinkle all the spices over chicken. Continue cooking until chicken is cooked (no pink inside). Split pitas in half, fill with chicken, and garnish with tomatoes, lettuce, avocado, and salsa. Enjoy warm or cold!

CanDo – Coalition for Activity and Nutrition to Defeat Obesity
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