Packing a Healthy Lunch for Your Kids

Tip #1
Ask your kids to help
• Give your kids healthy food choices from each food group, and ask them to decide what to pack. Here are some examples:
  - Fruits: fresh, frozen, dried, or baked (such as apple chips)
  - Vegetables: fresh, frozen, or baked
  - Lean protein: chicken, turkey, tuna, hard-boiled eggs, beans, nuts, or low-sugar nut butters
  - Low-fat dairy: milk, cheese, or yogurt
  - Whole grains: pita, sandwich bread, low-carb tortillas, or wheat pasta
• Let them be creative! Jazz up sandwiches with veggies. Pack a variety of fruit.

Mix and Match Ideas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BREAD</th>
<th>FILLEDINGS</th>
<th>VEGGIES</th>
<th>FRUITS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole wheat pita</td>
<td>Turkey slices</td>
<td>Baby carrots</td>
<td>Banana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tortilla (low-carb)</td>
<td>Mozzarella cheese</td>
<td>Sugar snap peas</td>
<td>Apple</td>
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<tr>
<td>½ Wheat bagel</td>
<td>Peanut butter</td>
<td>Cucumber coins</td>
<td>Raisins/dried fruit</td>
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<tr>
<td>½ Whole wheat bun</td>
<td>Cream cheese</td>
<td>Broccoli florets</td>
<td>Clementine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rye bread</td>
<td>Hummus</td>
<td>Salad</td>
<td>Melon cubes</td>
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</tbody>
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Tip #2
Plan ahead
• Take your children grocery shopping.
• Pack lunch with your kids the night before. Find foods (like baby carrots and dinner leftovers) that are quick to pack.
• Use MyPlate https://www.choosemyplate.gov/ as a guide.
• Go slowly when making changes. Begin by adding 1 vegetable to lunch. Next month, add 1 fruit.

Tip #3
Ask your child to pick a healthy treat for the end of the meal
• Pack a treat with less than 100 calories and no more than 12 grams of sugar. Too much sugar can make us hungry, tired, and grumpy a few hours later.
• To improve "brainpower," look for treats that are healthy, such as:
  - Fresh fruit salad or dried fruit (apricots/raisins)
  - Squeezeable yogurt
  - Low-fat chocolate pudding
  - Nuts (no salt or sugar added) or trail mix: cashews, walnuts, peanuts, almonds
  - Yogurt-covered raisins
• Wheat pretzels or multigrain tortilla chips with salsa
• High-protein bar

Tip #4
Make drinking water fun
• Let your kids take their favorite water bottle to school and encourage them to drink water throughout the school day.
• If the "flavor" of water is too bland for them, add a few pieces of frozen fruit to sweeten it up and keep it cooler.
• Avoid packing sugary drinks like juice, sweetened tea, energy drinks, sports drinks, and soda.

Tip #5
Keep it Cool
• Let your child choose a fun lunch box and reusable containers.
• Use ice packs or add a frozen bottle of water to protect against food spoiling.