

Courtesy of



Packing a Healthy Lunch for Your Kids

Tip #1 Ask your kids to help

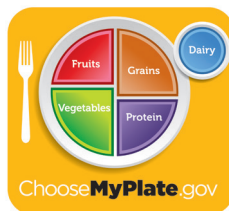
- Give your kids healthy food choices from each food group, and ask them to decide what to pack. Here are some examples:
 - Fruits: fresh, frozen, dried, or baked (such as apple chips)
 - Vegetables: fresh, frozen, or baked
 - Lean protein: chicken, turkey, tuna, hard-boiled eggs, beans, nuts, or low-sugar 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

BREAD	FILLINGS	VEGGIES	FRUITS
Whole wheat pita	Turkey slices	Baby carrots	Banana
Tortilla (low-carb)	Mozzarella cheese	Sugar snap peas	Apple
½ Wheat bagel	Peanut butter	Cucumber coins	Raisins/dried fruit
½ Whole wheat bun	Cream cheese	Broccoli florets	Clementine
Rye bread	Hummus	Salad	Melon cubes

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)
 - Squeezable 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.

Marsha Novick, Penn State Children’s Hospital, Hershey, Pennsylvania, USA; John Rausch, Columbia University Vagelos College Of Physicians & Surgeons, New York, New York, USA; Scott Kahan, Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, Baltimore, Maryland, USA.

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