

Healthy Lunch Packing Guide

Packing a school lunch can be a great way to provide your child with a healthy, nutritious lunch. School-aged kids can learn to build a healthy lunch by picking one item from each food group.

One of the most important aspects of eating healthy is balance.

Let this guide to help you and your child build a balanced and satisfying lunch!

<p>Whole Grains 1 serving = 1 slice or ½ cup</p> <p>Pick 1-2 servings</p>	<p>Whole grain bread Whole grain tortilla Whole grain pasta Millet Popcorn (no fat/ low fat)</p>	<p>Whole grain pita bread Brown or wild rice Quinoa Whole wheat pretzel Crackers</p>																		
<p>Vegetables 1 serving = ½ cup cooked or raw vegetables, or 1 cup leafy vegetables</p> <p>Pick 1 serving</p>	<p>Raw vegetables are easiest to pack, but if your child likes cooked vegetables those are also a good option.</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Avocado</td> <td>Green beans</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bell pepper</td> <td>Lettuce</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Broccoli</td> <td>Mixed vegetables</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Carrots</td> <td>Onion</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cauliflower</td> <td>Radish</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cherry tomato</td> <td>Snap peas</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cucumber</td> <td>Spinach</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Zucchini</td> </tr> </table>		Avocado	Green beans	Bell pepper	Lettuce	Broccoli	Mixed vegetables	Carrots	Onion	Cauliflower	Radish	Cherry tomato	Snap peas	Cucumber	Spinach		Zucchini		
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<p>Proteins 1 serving = 3 oz meat or fish, 2 TB nut butter, 1 oz nuts or seeds, 1 egg or ½ cup beans</p> <p>Pick 1 serving</p>	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>Peanut/ almond/ sunflower or soy butter</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Nuts</td> <td>Seeds</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tofu</td> <td>Fish</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Hard Boiled Eggs</td> <td>Hummus</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Beans</td> <td>Chicken</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Meat</td> <td>Edamame</td> </tr> </table>		Peanut/ almond/ sunflower or soy butter		Nuts	Seeds	Tofu	Fish	Hard Boiled Eggs	Hummus	Beans	Chicken	Meat	Edamame						
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<p>Low Fat Dairy Foods 1 serving= 1 cup of 1% or fat free milk, 4-6 oz yogurt, ½ cup cottage cheese, or 1 oz low fat cheese</p> <p>Pick 1 serving</p>	<p>Skim or low fat milk Fortified soy, almond or rice milk Low fat or non fat yogurt , Greek yogurt Low fat or non fat cottage cheese Reduced fat or part skim cheese or string cheese</p>																			

Tips for lunch packing:

- Get the kids involved! Give them choices as to which options from each food group they might like. For older kids, have them help with washing, cutting or preparing the foods. The more involved the kids are, the more likely they are to eat the food.
- Plan ahead. Make a weekly grocery shopping list and get the supplies you need.
- Prep, wash, cut and even portions for the week all at once to save time.
- Improve presentation to increase acceptability. Try making fruit or veggie kabobs, or cut sandwiches in different shapes.
- If your child doesn't like vegetables, let them take 2 servings from the fruit group.



Supplies Needed:

- Lunch box:
 - Choose one that is insulated and easy to clean and carry.
- Plastic containers or baggies:
 - Have a variety of sizes: Use snack size bags for snack foods to help control portions.
 - Keep small containers available for dips and sauces.
 - Choose plastic containers without BPA, especially if the food will be microwaved.
- Icepack:
 - Since most children will be leaving their lunch out at room temperature for several hours, be sure to include an icepack in an insulated bag to keep the food at a safe temperature.
 - You can also freeze water bottles, juice boxes, or yogurt, which should thaw out by lunch time.

For more information:

For recipes, food safety and nutrition tips:

<http://healthychild.org/>

For menus and recipe ideas for lunches, many helpful links:

<http://www.thelunchbox.org/>

Blog with great advice on using left overs and making a cute, kid friendly lunch box:

<http://lunchinabox.net/>