

What's For Lunch?

Packing a Healthy Lunch!

Make it Balanced

- Pack a lunch along with 1-2 snacks as needed.
- See the flip side for examples from the 3 food categories. **For lunch:** try to pack at least 1 food from each of the 3 food categories (vegetables and fruit, whole grain foods, and protein foods). **For snacks:** try to pack foods from at least 2 of the 3 food categories.
- Include at least one vegetable or fruit for each snack and meal.



The foods we eat during the day give us the energy and nutrients we need to be active, feel great and be productive at school or work.

Be Temperature Safe

Keep Cold Foods Cold

- Use an insulated lunch bag – paper and plastic bags do not keep foods cold.
- Pack an ice pack or a frozen water bottle.
- Keep lunches in the fridge until you are leaving for the day.



Keep Hot Foods Hot

- Use a thermos. Heat the thermos before using it by filling it with hot water. Leave it for 3-5 minutes, and then empty it before adding steaming hot food.



Be Food Safe

- Wash hands, utensils and surfaces with hot, soapy water before and while preparing food.
- Wash all fruit and vegetables thoroughly.
- Do not re-use perishable foods (sandwiches, hot foods, milk products) or plastic wrappings and foil.
- Wash reusable containers and water bottles daily with soap and hot water.



Packing a Healthy Snack!

- Apple + cheese
- Unsweetened applesauce + homemade muffin
- Carrots + celery + hummus
- Whole wheat toast + seed or nut butter
- Whole wheat pita + guacamole + shredded carrots and cucumber
- Cottage cheese + strawberries
- Homemade smoothie
- Roasted chickpeas + grapes
- Greek yogurt + blueberries
- Hardboiled egg + whole grain crackers
- Milk (or unsweetened fortified soy milk) + homemade granola



Healthy Drink Choices

- Water is the best choice to quench thirst in between meals and snacks!
- White milk is a great option. Keep flavoured milks (e.g., chocolate) as a "sometimes" choice.
- Sports drinks, pop, iced tea, lemonade and other fruit drinks are high in sugar, and some have caffeine. It is best to limit sugary drinks.
- Energy drinks are high in sugar and caffeine and are not recommended.
- Limit other drinks high in caffeine such as tea and coffee.

Get Creative!

Tips for packing healthy and tasty lunches with the three food categories:

Whole Grain Foods

- Whole grain bread, buns, pitas, wraps, bagels
- Whole grain pasta
- Brown rice, quinoa, whole wheat couscous, oatmeal



TIP:

Mix up the grain products to keep it interesting! Choose whole grains most often.

Vegetables & Fruit

- Baby carrots
- Celery sticks
- Pepper strips
- Cucumber slices
- Cherry tomatoes
- Roasted squash
- Leftover stir-fried vegetables
- Orange slices
- Banana
- Apple slices
- Grapes
- Unsweetened applesauce
- Canned fruit packed in water



TIP:

Pack a rainbow of colours for a variety of nutrients!

TIP:

Buying in-season and frozen produce helps cut costs.

Protein Foods

- 1% or 2% white milk
- Plain yogurt/Greek yogurt (add fresh or frozen fruit)
- Cheese cubes
- Unsweetened fortified soy beverage
- Cottage cheese
- Slices of leftover skinless chicken, turkey, beef, or pork
- Hard-boiled egg, peeled
- Hummus or other bean dip
- Canned light tuna packed in water



TIP:

Make your own yogurt-based dip with plain yogurt (or Greek yogurt), fresh or dried herbs, lemon juice and garlic.

Putting it all together:

Chicken and Veggie Pita

Stuff a whole grain pita with shredded cheese, sliced chicken breast and cucumber slices. Pack with a banana and a homemade whole grain muffin.

Oatmeal with Berries

Pack cooked oatmeal with fresh or frozen berries in a thermos. Pair with a container of milk and some assorted sliced vegetables with hummus for dipping.

Quinoa Stir Fry

Match leftover stir-fried veggies with quinoa and chickpeas for a twist on a stir fry. Add grapes and cheese cubes for a balanced lunch.

Pizza Lunch

Top a whole grain English muffin with pizza sauce, cooked bell peppers, mushrooms and shredded cheese. Pack with an unsweetened applesauce and a homemade granola bar.

TIP:

Plant-based proteins can be less expensive. Try vegetarian chili, hummus for dipping veggies, or falafel wraps.



For more information, call 1-800-660-5853
or visit www.healthunit.org

