



Nutritious Lunches From Home

Appendix 4

Make lunch a fun time of day:

1. Use garden foods
2. Send a joke or encouraging note
3. Send a theme lunch

Lunches brought from home should be at least as nutritious as school lunches by offering the same components for lunch. The goal with meals is to serve nutrient-rich foods and beverages such as fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat or nonfat dairy, lean meats, legumes, nuts and seeds.

The final column lists items that don't add to the nutrition of children in that category. Many contain a lot of sugar or saturated fat.

The following serving sizes can guide selections per age:

	Grades 1-8	Grades 9-12		
Food Components¹			Items that count for food component	Items that don't count for component
Milk, skim or 1% Available for purchase at school	1 cup (8 oz)	1 cup (8 oz)	Milk; Milk substitute such as soy milk	2% or whole milk; Ice cream; pudding
2 or more Fruit/Vegetables	¾-1 ¼ cup total	1-2 cup(s) total	Fresh, canned, dried, or frozen fruit or vegetable; 100% juice; Cooked dried peas or beans	Potato Chips; catsup; pickle relish; Juice < 100% fruit juice; fruit snacks; jam
Meat/Meat alternative: Focus on Lean meats or Low fat alternatives	2 oz	2 oz	Nuts/seeds; Peanut butter (2oz=4Tbsp); Lean Meat, poultry or fish; Cheese; Cottage Cheese; Eggs; Cooked Dry beans or peas; Yogurt; alternative protein products like soy burgers	Bacon/Imitation bacon bits; Cream Cheese; Imitation cheese
Grains/Breads: Aim for greater than half items to be Whole Grain like whole wheat pasta or whole grain tortilla or whole wheat bread	1-2 portions per lunch 1 portion=1 slice bread or ½ bun or 5 crackers, etc	2-2 ½ portions per lunch 1 portion = 1 slice bread or ½ bun or 5 crackers, etc	Bread; English Muffin; Brown or white rice, pasta, noodles; Pizza crust; Tortilla; Pita bread; Bun; Roll; Crackers; Dry or cooked cereal	Popcorn; potato chips Starchy vegetables like corn, potato, & peas fit in vegetable group

¹ Based on Federal Register, Vol. 76, No. 9, January 13, 2011/USDA Proposed Rules: Nutrition Standards in the National School Lunch and Breakfast Program

Reduce Sodium in Home-packed Lunches

Many processed foods are very high in sodium, which is connected with heart disease and development of high blood pressure, so to lower sodium in your child's lunch, look for foods that are:

- * Fresh, or cooked at home from fresh items
- * Low or no salt added
- * Less than 600 mg sodium per serving for an entrée or sandwich; less than 480 mg sodium for soup
- * Less than 250 mg sodium per serving for any other individual item
- * Fruit and vegetables have very little sodium while containing needed nutrients and fiber; what a bonus in the lunchbox! Most pieces of fruit or vegetables are less expensive than a bag of chips too.
- * Try low-sodium flavors like fruit juice, pepper, herbs, spices, vinegar, zests, yogurt in sandwiches, soups, salads





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***Fun, interesting lunches and snacks plan for Safety and Variety of: 1.Food 2.Colors 3.Textures 4.Culture ***

Milk: available at the lunch site. Juice is available but milk is the better choice to get calcium, Vitamin D, and protein.



Fruit : fresh, canned, frozen, or dried; Vary the shape: whole, sliced, chunks, halves; one fruit or combine many; make a face with it; make a salsa or salad for a side dish; make into sauce (add granola and you have a crisp); fruit on yogurt

Vegetable: fresh, canned, or frozen; combine in a salad, soup, casserole, or meatloaf; vary the shape (round, sticks, diagonal, thin or wide); grate, slice, or chop; put on a sandwich or wrap, in eggs,

Grains/Breads: Use at least 50% whole grain. Look for at least 2 gm fiber in each serving: whole wheat or oat bread; whole wheat or whole grain corn tortillas; whole grain pasta; brown or wild rice; whole grain crackers, buns, and rolls; Whole grain cereals (look for less than 35% calories as sugar- less than 6 gm sugar for ¾ cup)

Lean meat or alternatives: Fish like tuna or salmon or cod; Egg, hard-cooked; Cooked dried beans/peas; Nuts, seeds or their butters; Low-fat cheese; Yogurt; Leftover meat like roast chicken, turkey, or meatloaf, sliced or chopped or strips

Below are sample lunch ideas using components from previous page

<p>Food Safety: Send an ice pack in a thermal lunch container as most items will need some refrigeration. Freeze a 100% juice box to act as ice pack. If sending a heated item like leftover casserole, be sure it is in a thermal storage container to keep it at least 140° F.</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send foods that complement school nutrition lessons Wash hands before handling foods Prewash, cut, and store vegetables Teach children about parts of a complete meal using components Pack/refrigerate lunch night before Add ice pack to food for safety Focus on fruit instead of sweets 	<p>Lunch areas cannot have Foods of Minimal Nutrition Value (FMNV) during lunch so please do not send or bring carbonated beverages, marshmallows, popsicles, gum, or candies like jelly beans, gummy candy, or corn candy that are predominately sugar or artificial sweetener having no nutritional value.</p>
<p>Theme Day(Greek) Pita w/ Romaine leaf holding 2 Tbsp. Hummus, ¼ cup plain yogurt mixed with ½ cup chopped cucumber / tomatoes; Chicken and rice soup (lemon adds a Greek touch); 1 oz nuts and ¼ cup raisins</p>	<p>Left over casserole: cooked dried beans, fish, meat &/or cheese, ½ cup vegetables, and pasta or rice(brown or whole grain preferred) in low salt/fat tomatoes or other sauce; Roll or bread; Apple(or wedges dipped in lemon water)</p>	<p>Healthy Soup (like tomato) in thermal container; five no-salt-added Crackers; ½ Low-fat Cheese Sandwich (on whole wheat raisin bread); Vegetable sticks; ½ cup Mandarin oranges or other fruit.</p>	
<p>Sandwich with leftover meat from evening meal;(no margarine but 1 tsp mustard, catsup, or salad dressing and green lettuce for sandwich); 8 crunchy baby carrots or ½ cup other vegetable; 6-8 strawberries or other fruit</p>	<p>Home Fast-Food: Soft shell taco: whole wheat/whole grain corn tortilla. Filling: 1 oz cheese, 1 oz leftover lean meat , ½ cup black beans, ¼ cup Salsa, ½ cup green lettuce/vegetables to put on tortilla; ½ banana or other fruit; 2 graham cracker squares.</p>	<p>Hard-cooked Egg; ½ Whole grain bagel (or a sandwich); Lettuce or Cabbage Salad with ½ cup chopped vegetables, 1 oz mozzarella cheese; Container: low fat salad dressing /lemon wedge to squeeze; ½ cup pineapple or fresh fruit in season</p>	



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