



# LUNCH BOX IDEAS

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**Are you putting together your child's lunch box during the morning rush?**

**Are you confused about what makes a healthy lunch box?**

**Here are some tips to help you pack a healthy lunch for your child.**

## Some tips before you get started:

- Plan ahead: pack all or most items the night before, this will help you avoid the rush.
- Have a 'lunch menu' project with your child: plan certain days with a certain lunch, i.e. Mondays – turkey sandwich with carrots
- Get your child involved with making healthy lunch box choices because they are more likely to eat them
- Include foods from at least 4 food groups at each meal to obtain a variety of nutrients. Food groups include: Dairy, Protein, Vegetables, Fruit, and Grains.
- Include an ice pack or a frozen water bottle in lunch boxes with perishable items, i.e. cheese, yogurt, milk, cut up fruit/vegetables, sandwich fillings
- 'Invest' in small containers for condiments as needed.
- Include healthy lunchtime drinks: water or low-fat milk or 100% juice 4-8oz (once per day)
- Don't let lunches get repetitive. Try different kinds of breads, meats, cheese, dips, small treats and short notes to remind them you love them.
- When adding tomato or lettuce to the sandwich, place slices between the meat or cheese and not next to the bread so the bread remains firm and doesn't become soggy.
- Pre-portion snacks that you buy at the grocery store into snack size baggies or plastic containers immediately so that they are ready to go for the week.
- Every so often include a special note/card for your child; a smile is a great way to start a meal!

**Children who eat nutritious foods do better in school. Packing a healthy lunch can ensure your child gets the nutrients he or she needs to stay energized and ready to learn.**

## Try these lunch ideas below: Add your child's favorite fruit and vegetable



Hot soup: warm up leftover soup in the morning and pour into a Thermos. Add a roll or whole wheat crackers	Strips of grilled chicken breast with avocado, tomato and peppers in a whole wheat tortilla wrap or pita bread	Whole grain crackers Hummus Reduced fat cheese Add any vegetable on the side	Stir fry pita: mix steamed rice, mixed vegetables and leftover meat with teriyaki sauce and stuff it into a pita
Peanut butter sandwich topped with sliced bananas, apples or raisins on 100% whole wheat bread; almond or cashew butter is also a good choice; add a crunchy celery on the side	Whole wheat pasta salad with cubed lean ham or turkey, Vegetables and low fat dressing Whole wheat roll or whole wheat crackers	Lahmajun Vegetable on the side (i.e. colorful peppers, cucumbers, cherry tomatoes) Low fat/fat free yogurt	Sandwiches: ham, turkey, low fat cheese, roast beef, chicken, tuna or egg salad 100% whole wheat bread Try mustard, 1 tsp mayo and a crunch vegetable on the side
Quesadilla made with reduced fat cheese whole wheat tortilla; or try a chicken quesadilla	Your child's favorite lunch meat rolled into a tube Low fat cheese cubes Whole grain crackers	Burritos: use mini tortillas with beans and low fat cheese, Salsa in a small container	Whole grain bagel Low fat cottage cheese Raisins, applesauce Nuts
Brown rice Stir fried vegetables Diced meat or tofu or beans	Vegetable or cheese pizza; try Canadian bacon and pineapple toppings	Low fat yogurt with fruit to dip in Whole grain crackers	Rice bowls made with rice topped with last night's leftover meat and vegetables
Baked potato Low fat cheese Steamed or raw vegetables	Leftover dinner packed in a thermos	Whole grain cereal in a bag Low fat/fat free milk Fruit and nuts	Tuna salad Whole grain crackers



### Solutions for the Uneaten Lunch Box

- Kid's input is important. Encourage them to get involved in selecting their lunch meals.
- Children like to be social and get out and play, ignoring their stomachs. Explain simply that having their lunch will help them stay energized throughout the remainder of the school day and stay focused in class. Rather than threatening them to eat their school lunch, just serve up healthy snacks when they get home (grapes, sliced peaches, low-fat cheese with crackers, low fat yogurt with fruit, etc.) They may not eat the fruit but if it is sliced and ready on the plate when they arrive, you may be surprised that they may want more.
- Keep a cooler in the car filled with healthy snacks in case your kids are starving after school.