



## Thinking Outside the Lunchbox: Guide to healthy lunches

Although school cafeterias are doing more and more to improve school, one of the best way for parents to influence control what goes into their children's bodies is to pack a school lunch. Nearly 1/3 of children's calories come from food consumed at school. Packing a lunch is good way to ensure your child is getting the nutrients they need.

### Dispelling Lunch Myths:

- **Packed lunch takes a lot of time:** This is a marketing ploy created by big food. The same folks who say that "cooking dinner is a chore" and "brown bag lunches are boring." Lunch can be simple, tasty, nourishing and interesting.
- **Kids won't eat salad or veggies for lunch.** NOT TRUE. Most kids love salad. They are crunch colorful and provide endless combinations of textures and flavors. *Keep dressing separate to keep leaves fresh.* Rethink the salad as sliced veggies and dip. Healthy dips are: hummus or yogurt based.
- **Kids will only eat "Kid Food."** (see #1). There is NO SUCH THING AS KID FOOD. THERE IS ONLY FOOD. Stop this pure marketing ploy in its tracks. Don't order off the kids' menu, don't buy products advertised to kids. Those foods are filled with sugar, salt and fat that kids don't need. Kids don't need tubes of artificially colored yogurt, brightly colored juice pouches, or bright yellow boxes of hermetically sealed processed food. Not only does this generate a lot of unnecessary trash, the number of artificial colors, preservatives, chemicals etc. are not good for growing bodies.

Pick and choose from the lists below to create interesting flavor combinations and to ensure a good mix of proteins, fats and carbohydrates:

#### Veggies:

Bell peppers	Green Beans	Potatoes*
Purple cabbage	Broccoli*	Snap Peas
Tomatoes	Avocado	Soy beans (edamame)*
Carrots*	Cucumbers	Spinach
Cauliflower*	Celery	Sweet Potatoes*

#### Fresh Fruit:

Apples	Mango	Nectarines
Apricots	Melon	Pears

Blueberries  
Cherries  
Grapefruit  
Grapes  
Kiwi

Orange Sections  
Peaches  
Pineapple  
Strawberries

Plums  
Raspberries  
Bananas

**Dried Fruits:**

Apples  
Figs  
Papaya

Mixed Fruit  
Mango  
Cranberries

Dates  
Apricots  
Raisins

**Proteins:**

Beans  
Cottage Cheese  
Nut butters (assuming no allergies)  
Fish

Beef  
Eggs  
Tofu

Cheese  
Hot dogs (organic, if possible)  
Nuts (assuming no allergies)  
Yogurt

**Grains:**

Bagels  
Couscous  
Rice  
Whole wheat pasta

Pita  
Popcorn  
Polenta

Bread (100% whole wheat)  
Crackers  
Lavash (flat bread)

**Dessert:**

Applesauce  
Pretzels

Granola  
Trail mix

Oatmeal bars (less than 10g of sugar)  
Yogurt with fruit