

Tools for Parents: Spice up the brown bag



Lunch Box Ideas

Sick of packing the same lunch each day for your child? Have fun using the steps below to create a variety of healthy ideas for your next brown bag lunch.

Step 1: Choose an item from each column to create the main entrée. (Wheat tortilla wrap, grilled chicken, lettuce, tomatoes, and low fat cheese)

Step 2: Select a fruit or vegetable with a dip

(optional) along with another side. (Apple slices with yogurt and cup almonds)

Step 3: Complete meal with water, milk or any other non-sweetened beverage.

Packing a lunch

- Take your child in grocery shopping
- Involve your child in preparation
- Ask your child what healthy choices they would like to buy for their lunches
- Offer win-win lunch choices (“Would you like peaches or pears with your lunch today?” vs. peaches or cookies)
- Add stickers, joke of the week or a surprise note.
- Change up the same old lunch by:

Kabobs: Cut food into small pieces and use a straw to hold the food together.

Cookie cutter sandwiches: add variety to the basic squared sandwich

Pinwheels: Wrap a tortilla and cut in slices. Use flattened bread (use rolling pin)

String cheese roll-up: Two slices of ham wrapped around a whole string cheese

Main Entrée

Starch

- Wheat bread
- Bagel
- Wheat tortilla
- Corn tortilla
- Pita Bread
- Brown Rice
- Whole Wheat Pasta

Meat/Legumes

- Turkey
- Ham
- Beef
- Grilled chicken
- Tuna
- Salmon
- Beans
- Peanut Butter

Condiment/Spread

- Mustard/Honey mustard
- Low fat cream cheese
- Low fat sour cream
- Low fat cheese
- Salsa
- Low fat ranch
- Jelly
- Lettuce
- Tomatoes
- Onion
- Red & Green peppers
- Avocado
- Baby Spinach
- Zucchini
- Corn

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School lunch

- Look over the school lunch menu. Don't know how to get the menu? Check out your school district's Web site
- Ask your child to choose which lunches they want at school and when they would like to pack a lunch
- After school, ask your child: "What did you choose for lunch?" "What fruits and vegetables did you eat for lunch?" "Which food did you enjoy the most at lunch?"



Pantry/Refrigerator list

Use this space to create a pantry list. Cut this out on dashed line and post on the inside of the pantry for quick and healthy lunch ingredients.

Pantry

1. Canned Pineapple

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Refrigerator

1. String Cheese

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Fruits & Vegetables

- Broccoli
- Baby carrots
- Celery
- Asparagus
- Cauliflower
- Cucumber
- Snap Peas
- Olives
- Tomatoes
- Apples
- Raisins
- Banana
- Orange
- Grapes
- Plums
- Blueberries
- Cantaloupe
- Honeydew

Dips

- No fat ranch
- Salsa
- Yogurt
- Peanut butter

Sides

- Cereal (with at least 5g fiber)
- Light Popcorn
- Triscuit Crackers
- Granola Bar
- Nuts 1/4 cup
- Yogurt
- String Cheese

Beverages

Choose non-calorie beverages. Limit 100% juice to no more than 4 oz/day. Keep beverages cold by using an ice pack or freezing the beverage the night before.

- Water with a lemon, lime, or orange slice.
- Low-fat milk
- Non- calorie flavored water
- Crystal Light