

BE SCHOOL LUNCH SAVVY

If your child eats the lunch provided at school, do your homework to ensure (s)he is able to make healthy choices. Get your child involved in the research process too!

Read the menu.

All schools provide a monthly school lunch menu, usually online. Review it at the beginning of each month and help your child select and highlight healthier choices. Many schools now offer green salads.

Check for quality ingredients.

Some schools are trying to do better by providing whole grains, lean protein and fresh fruits and vegetables (canned often contain additives and are not as healthy). School nutrition services will provide this information.

Instill healthy eating habits at home.

This will help children make smarter choices in the foods they choose in the lunch line at school.

Maintain a small balance.

If you pack a lunch for your child always have some meals on his lunch account at school so he can get a lunch in the cafeteria if his lunch drives away on the bus or gets stepped on at recess.

SACK LUNCH SMARTS

Pack the night before.

Include your child in making lunches the night before, giving them time to prepare, and help them make healthy choices.

Choose foods your kids LOVE.

The foods you pack will not provide your child with nutrition if they are tossed out or uneaten. Find healthy foods that your kids love and pack them in their lunch!

Quick-pack snacks.

Instead of buying the 100-calorie bags of cookies and chips, make your own quick packs and keep them in the fridge for the kids to choose from. Use zippered snack bags to help with portion control. Here are some suggestions:

- Veggie Sticks: carrots, celery, cucumber and jicama (pack it with a small packet of peanut butter to go or hummus for dipping)
- Raw Nuts: almonds, cashews, sunflower seeds
- Trail Mix: dried fruit (raisins, banana chips, dried cranberries, dates) and mixed nuts
- Frozen Yogurt: freeze yogurt tubes or premixed fruit yogurt
- Homemade "Lunchables": pre-bag non-processed cheese slices, whole grain crackers and nitrate-free lunch meat
- Fresh Fruit: grapes, berries, and clementine oranges

Keep it cold.

Use an insulated lunch box. Brown bags don't keep food cold enough and food can spoil.

Sources:

<https://www.drsearswellnessinstitute.org/healthy-living/healthy-tips/drsearstips/schoolsmarts/>

<https://www.drsearswellnessinstitute.org/healthy-living/recipes-3/easy-after-school-snacks/>

