

Pre-School Pages



A newsletter for parents of pre-schoolers
 packed with food, facts & fun
 from your local county extension office

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Kids Care Packing a Fun School Lunch

A new school year brings many exciting changes. As parents, one way you can add some excitement into your young person's school day is by mixing it up when it comes to their lunch.



You might be thinking there is nothing exciting about packing a lunch, but with a little planning and preparation, it can even become fun for you.

Planning and preparation is key to making your school lunch packing routine work. Make a weekly or monthly menu to help you navigate the grocery store and give your child something to look forward to each week. Let them help you create the menu.

Use the weekend to prepare for the week by prepackaging certain items like crackers, baby carrots and berries. If your young person is old enough, have them help you place things in their lunch box either the night before or in the morning.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's MyPlate, young people between 4- and 13-years old need 1.5 cups of fruit, 2 cups of vegetables, 5-6 ounces of grains, 4-5 ounces of protein and 3 cups of dairy each day.

You can use their lunch to help them get their recommended servings from each food group and present them in interesting ways. Here are some suggestions:

- Make the old sandwich new by switching up the bread. Try using breads like whole wheat, multigrain, raisin, pita pockets, bagels, rice cakes and English muffins. Use cookie cutters to cut the bread into different shapes.
- Serve hummus with carrot sticks, celery sticks and a cubed whole-wheat pita for dipping.
- Core an apple and stuff the inside with peanut butter. Top with raisins, nuts, sunflower seeds or toasted coconut. The filling keeps the apple from turning brown.
- Make a sandwich filling by combining low-fat cream cheese and jelly or spread bread with cream cheese and top with dried fruits like raisins, apples or apricots.
- Make trail mix by combining foods like healthy breakfast cereals, dried fruits, pretzels, popcorn, sunflower seeds or pumpkin seeds in a plastic bag.
- Use "filler" vegetables like lettuce, onions, tomatoes and peppers on sandwiches to help your young person meet their daily vegetable requirements.
- Make healthy muffins with pumpkin, banana, zucchini, walnuts or crushed pineapple. Another nice treat is oatmeal cookies with raisins.
- Give them the ingredients in their lunch to build their own sandwich, wrap or taco.



- Include extra surprises like stickers, riddles, comics or notes inside their lunch box.

Source: Heather Norman-Burgdolf, Extension Specialist in Food and Nutrition

Celebrate Better Breakfast Month



Why Bother with Breakfast? Breakfast is a great way to give the body the refueling it needs. Kids who eat breakfast tend to eat healthier overall and are

more likely to participate in physical activities — two great ways to help maintain a healthy weight.

Skipping breakfast can make kids feel tired, restless, or irritable. In the morning, their bodies need to refuel for the day ahead after going without food for 8 to 12 hours during sleep. Their mood and energy can drop by mid-morning if they don't eat at least a small morning meal.

Breakfast also can help keep kids' weight in check. Breakfast kick-starts the body's metabolism, the process by which the body converts the fuel in food to energy. And when the metabolism gets moving, the body starts burning calories.

Also, people who don't eat breakfast often consume more calories throughout the day and are more likely to be overweight. That's because someone who skips breakfast is likely to get famished before lunchtime and snack on high-calorie foods or overeat at lunch.

Here are some ideas for healthy breakfasts to try:

- whole-grain cereal with low-fat milk topped with fruit
- whole-grain waffles topped with peanut butter or ricotta cheese and fruit
- hot cereal topped with nuts or fruit sprinkled with cinnamon, nutmeg, allspice, or cloves

- half a whole-grain bagel topped with peanut butter and fresh fruit (banana or apple wedges) and low-fat milk
- breakfast smoothie (low-fat milk or yogurt, fruit, and teaspoon of bran, whirled in a blender)
- vegetable omelet with whole-wheat toast
- shredded cheese on a whole-wheat tortilla, folded in half and microwaved for 20 seconds and topped with salsa

Source: Mary L. Gavin, MD, Kidshealth.org

Let's Eat

Avocado Melon Breakfast Smoothie

Makes: 2 Servings

Prep time: 5 minutes

- 1 large, ripe avocado
- 1 cup honeydew melon chunks (about 1 slice)
- 1/2 lime, juiced (1 1/2 tsp lime juice)
- 1 cup 8 oz milk (fat free)
- 1 cup fat-free yogurt (plain)
- 1/2 cup 100% apple juice or white grape juice
- 1 tablespoon honey



Cut avocado in half, remove pit. Scoop out flesh, place in blender. Add remaining ingredients; blend well. Serve cold.

Nutrition Information for 1 cup Calories 320, Total Fat 11 g, Saturated Fat 2 g, Cholesterol 5 mg, Sodium 170 mg, Total Carbohydrate 46 g, Dietary Fiber 5 g, Total Sugars 37 g, Added Sugars included 4 g, Protein 13 g.

Sincerely,

Vicki Wynn

County Extension Agent for
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