



# WHAT TO PACK: CREATING A HEALTHY LUNCHBOX

With the school year kicking off, the challenge of packing school lunches that are also nutritious and appealing to kids seems to add extra stress to our hectic days. Trying to make school lunches balanced and favorable for your child can seem incredibly difficult at times. However, with proper planning and creativity you can make your child's lunch box both fun and nutritious. Here are some helpful tips to help properly fuel your child for academic success.

## A BALANCED LUNCH GUIDE

When creating a healthy and balanced lunch, it does not need to be fancy or complicated. What matters the most is that your child's lunch provides them with sustained energy, supports focus, and keeps them full until their next meal. Try and add these key foods and nutrients in each meal for your child.

### PROTEIN:

Keeps your child fuller for longer and helps with muscle growth and repair

- Lean Sliced Meats (turkey, chicken, ham)
- String Cheese
- Boiled Eggs
- Hummus or Bean Dips
- Nut Butters
- Greek Yogurt
- Edamame
- Tofu Cubes

### WHOLE GRAINS:

Offer long lasting energy, fiber, and supports digestion

- Whole Grain Bread and Wraps
- Quinoa
- Brown Rice
- Whole Grain Pasta and Crackers
- Oatmeal





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## A BALANCED LUNCH GUIDE

### FRUITS AND VEGETABLES:

Support immunity, digestion, and overall health

- Apple Slices
- Grapes
- Oranges
- Strawberries
- Bananas
- Dried Fruit
- Carrots
- Celery
- Cucumber Slices
- Bell Peppers
- Small Salad

### HEALTHY FATS:

Great for brain development and absorb fat-soluble vitamins (A, D, E, and K)

- Avocados
- Nuts
- Cheese
- Chia or Flax Seeds





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## PREPARE AND PACK LUNCH THE NIGHT BEFORE

Having lunch packed and ready to go the night before can save a great amount of stress during the morning rush. School mornings are often filled with chaos and stress. Packing your child's lunch can take time out of your morning routine that can be used to make sure that your child is ready for the school day. Here are some helpful tips when it comes to packing and preparing your child's lunch the night before.

- Pre-portion lunches into containers or bento boxes
- Wash, cut, or peel fruits and vegetables before hand
  - Tip: Sprinkle lemon juice on apple slices to keep them fresh
- For sandwiches, either add dressings and sauces in the morning or on the side in reusable sauce containers
- Pack lunches in insulated reusable bags/lunch boxes
- Make extra dinner to use for lunch the next day
- Create a weekly lunch menu so that you have a general idea of what to pack each day

## KID-APPROVED RECIPES

Here are some examples of quick and easy kid-approved recipes

- **LUNCH BOX SLIDERS:** Mini sandwich rolls with your choice of lean slices of meat, avocado, and mayonnaise. Serve with apple slices and whole wheat crackers
- **VEGETABLE PASTA:** Whole grain pasta in a red sauce with added zucchini slices. Serve with orange slices and cheese sticks.
- **MEDITERRANEAN MEATBALL PLATTER:** Meatballs with whole grain pita. On the side include hummus with vegetables such as sliced bell peppers and carrots.
- **CHICKEN AND VEGETABLE QUESADILLA:** Whole wheat tortilla with shredded cheese, shredded chicken, corn, and black beans. On the side serve avocado slices and sea salt tortilla chips

