



What's for lunch? (Ideas for Children)

For more information call the Health ACTION Line at 613-345-5685 or 1-800-660-5853 or visit us on the web at: www.healthunit.org

3 simple steps to create a lunch your kids will eat

Providing your kids with a healthy lunch may seem difficult, but it can be easy if you follow the steps below. With a little bit of advanced planning you will be able to make a well-balanced lunch in minutes. Read on and see...it's as easy as 1, 2, 3!

Include foods from at least three or four food groups to make a balanced lunch. Add in a snack and a drink and you're set!

Step 1

Vegetables and Fruit

- Carrot sticks
- Broccoli & cauliflower florets
- Cucumber slices
- Celery sticks
- Bananas
- Apple slices
- Oranges
- Canned fruit (unsweetened)
- Applesauce (unsweetened)
- Dried fruits
- 100% pure fruit juices

TIP Choose colourful vegetables and fruits.

Grain Products

• Tortillas	• Bread
• Pita pockets	• Bagels
• Pasta	• Muffins
• Buns	• Rice cakes

TIP Whole grains are the best choice.

Milk and Alternatives

- Milk
- Chocolate milk
- Yogurt (drinks, tubes, or cups)
- Cheese
- Cottage cheese
- Milk pudding

TIP Choose lower fat milk products.

Meat and Alternatives

- Low fat deli meats (ham, chicken, roast beef or turkey breast)
- Chickpea spread (hummus)
- Lentils & beans
- Meat sauce
- Chili
- Tuna
- Nuts & seeds (almonds, sunflower seeds)

TIP Choose leaner meats and meat alternatives.

Step 2

Add one of the following snacks, or create your own:

• Homemade oatmeal cookies	• Yogurt and fruit
• Crackers and cheese	• Homemade muffins
• Veggie sticks and yogurt dip	• Trail mix

Step 3

Add a drink to complete the meal:

Skip the pop and punch - choose white milk, chocolate milk, water or 100% fruit juice. Low sodium vegetable juice is another healthy choice.

By following the 3 steps you will become a healthy lunch expert in no time. With practice you will be able to prepare a balanced lunch in minutes!

**Let children help prepare their lunch
– that way they will be more likely to eat it!**

Allow your child to:

- Gather food from the refrigerator & cupboards
- Stir, pour & measure
- Wash vegetables and fruit
- Put sandwiches together
- Put foods into packages

Spending time with your child creating a meal will teach them about healthy eating and will encourage them to take an active role in their own nutrition.

**Keep food safe — Keep hot food *hot*
and cold food *cold*!**

- Lead by example – wash your hands before you prepare lunch and help your child do the same.
- Use a thermos to keep foods hot until it is time to eat.
- Freeze 100% juice boxes, milk, or water – they will keep the cold foods cold and will thaw out by the time your child is ready to eat lunch.

**MORE
TIPS**

- Children have a limited time to eat at school so keep portion sizes small and simple.
- Plan ahead. Ask your children what they would like to eat and get ingredients when you shop.
- Remember to compromise! Encourage healthier choices such as whole grains, milk and 100% juice and allow your child to choose a treat every so often.
- Add excitement by including a note or a sticker in the lunch bag.
- Cut sandwiches into small pieces or shapes to make them more fun to eat.
- Use small reusable containers instead of plastic sandwich bags. You will save money in the long run.



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