



Easy ideas, for lunches they'll love

Parents greatly influence what their kids eat and with 16% of children in the U.S. overweight (and this number is increasing), it is vitally important for parents to encourage and model healthy eating habits. To help parents prepare a healthy school lunch, try some of these easy ideas:

- Include 3 to 4 of the 5 core food groups in their lunch (low fat dairy, protein, fruits, vegetables and whole grains).
- Make snack bags of vegetable sticks, and cubed fruits so they are ready to grab and throw into lunch boxes.
- Select juice boxes that are 100% juice.
- Send a small container of lite fruit cocktail to mix with a carton of vanilla yogurt.
- Try some new sandwich ideas: Wrap lean lunch meat, shredded cheese, lettuce and tomato in a whole grain tortilla that's been spread with low fat vegetable cream cheese. Use whole grain pita bread or English muffins stuffed with tuna or chicken salad. Add banana slices, raisins, sliced strawberries or peach slices to a peanut butter sandwich.
- Peel a cucumber, slice in half lengthwise, hollow out the center and fill with light cheese spread or meat salad.
- Other easy ideas: Pack leftover chicken or pizza, hard boiled eggs and whole grain crackers, pasta salad with vegetables and shredded cheese, pita bread triangles and baby carrots with a hummus dip, cheese cubes, crackers and grapes or tortilla chips with bean/cheese dip.

Make it Healthy

Replace the chips and candy with healthier alternatives:

- trail mix
- popcorn
- mini fruit muffins
- string cheese
- whole grain graham crackers
- multi grain pretzels
- dried fruits
- vegetable sticks and yogurt ranch dressing
- grape tomatoes, baby carrots, and pepper strips
- dry cereal mixed with nuts and dried fruit
- whole grain granola bars

Check out
“Easy Meals for Healthy Kids”
for tips and recipes at
meijermealbox.com/healthykids



Make it Fun

- Have your children help you prepare their lunch-they are more likely to eat it!
- Cut sandwiches into fun shapes (try using a cookie cutter).
- Write your child a note on the peel of a banana.
- Buy cheese in different shapes-sun and moon, cubes, etc.
- Assemble fruits chunks on a straw "skewer". Serve with yogurt dip.
- Use fun shaped pasta for pasta salads.
- Pack ingredients so kids can assemble their own lunch-tacos, mini cheese/meat/cracker sandwiches, etc.
- Make your own trail mix at home using your child's favorite cereal, raisins, nuts, and mini-pretzels. Toss in a few fruit gummies as a surprise.
- Add a special treat - a note, small game, riddle, cartoon, etc.

Make it Safe

- Always prepare lunches with clean hands and on a clean surface.
- Keep cold foods cold with freezer gel packs, and/or insulated lunch boxes; pre-chill foods; use frozen juice boxes to keep food cold (they will thaw by mealtime so keep in a Ziploc bag); keep hot foods in a thermos).
- Pack hand wipes for quick clean up.



Look for NuVal

The NuVal nutrition scoring system considers over 30 nutrients and boils it all down into one simple number you can trust to help you choose healthier food. Scores range from 1-100, higher numbers are more nutritious foods.

The NuVal scores can be found on Meijer shelf price tags on store brand and national brand products and can be used to compare foods within similar food groups.

"Trade up" foods to get a higher score at your next meal or snack; for example, trade up your regular pretzel sticks (NuVal score: 5) for Meijer Honey Wheat Pretzel Braid (NuVal score: 12).