

Nutrition For Active People

Secrets To Making School Lunches That Kids Won't Want To Trade

(NAPSA)—Making easy yet healthful lunches that your child won't want to trade with friends in the lunchroom doesn't have to be difficult.

To help you help your kids refuel at school, here are several ideas for packing a healthful lunch:

Keep it interesting. Pack a small quantity of several foods in a bento-type lunch box to keep things interesting. Bento boxes are a great way to offer healthy foods in a fun and attractive way. Have your child help cut sandwiches with cookie cutters into different shapes. Add colorful fruits and vegetables in different sizes and pack yummy dips such as fat-free or low-fat yogurt or hummus.

Pick a theme. Trigger your children's creative juices by suggesting themes, such as:

- **The Dip:** Cut a baked chicken breast into strips and pack them with honey mustard for dipping. Include carrots and broccoli to dip in fat-free or reduced-fat ranch dressing.

- **Backwards:** Make an inside-out sandwich using lettuce to wrap turkey, fat-free or low-fat cheese and tomato.

- **Mexican Food Mondays:** Set out whole-wheat tortillas, lettuce, fat-free or low-fat sour cream, salsa, brown rice and beans that aren't refried and have your kids build healthy burritos or tacos.

Forget the white bread. Banish boredom by using whole-grain pitas, tortillas or rolls for sandwiches. Switch out the fillers, too. For example:

- If your child loves PB&J, make a peanut butter and banana roll-up. Spread peanut butter on a whole-grain tortilla, add a sliced banana and roll.

- Fill a pita with your child's favorite vegetables, adding hummus for extra flavor.



- Spread some pizza sauce on a whole-wheat tortilla, add some low-fat or fat-free mozzarella cheese, then melt, roll and slice.

Mix up the sides. Go beyond pretzels.

- Dip apple slices in nut or seed butter.

- Pack snap peas, sliced bell peppers or cucumbers for color and crunch.

- Add more variety with air-popped, low-fat popcorn.

Don't forget that juice and sodas can be high in sugar and calories. Replace them with water or fat-free or low-fat milk.

For more healthful lunch ideas and tips for creating a healthful shopping list, visit We Can! (Ways to Enhance Children's Activity & Nutrition)[®] at <http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov>. Developed by the National Institutes of Health, We Can! provides parents, caregivers and communities with free tips, tools and guidance to help children ages 8–13 maintain a healthy weight by improving food choices, increasing physical activity and reducing screen time.

So before you roll up your shirt-sleeves and call on your young helpers, arm yourself with these and other ideas for making a healthful lunch that your children will look forward to all morning.