

## Pack A Healthy Lunch So Kids Don't Pack On Pounds

(NAPSA)—A healthy, nutritious lunch may be one of the most important items you can pack for school.

Statistics from the CDC show that the percentage of children who are overweight or obese tripled between 1980 and 2000. There is a solution to this public health epidemic, though. A recent report from the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences says the school environment is vital in shaping lifelong health and dietary patterns. Parents can help their kids stay fit and healthy by providing well-balanced lunches that are low in saturated and trans fats, high in lean protein and rich in vitamins and minerals.

“By packing a lunch that includes lean proteins like canned tuna, along with fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy, parents ensure that their children get the healthy foods they need to stay mentally and physically fit,” said Janice Newell Bissex, MS, RD, co-author of “The Moms’ Guide to Meal Makeovers” and co-founder of MealMakeoverTV.com.

### A Tidal Wave of Science Supports Fish

Increasingly, science tells us that consuming at least two seafood meals a week is beneficial for American families. This growing body of evidence, including studies in *The Journal of the American Medical Association*, *The Lancet*, and *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, proves that the lean protein and omega-3 fatty acids in fish, including canned tuna, are essential for building a strong body and mind. Omega-3s increase mental acuity and decrease the risk of diabetes, obesity, asthma and inflammatory disorders.

The FDA says tuna is a beneficial food and the American Heart Association recommends children eat at least two servings a week.

### Packing A Lunch Kids Will Love

To make sure children bring fun and nutritious meals to school:

### Scoop-It-Up Tuna Salad

*Makes 2 Servings*

- One 6-ounce can solid white or light tuna in water, drained and flaked**
- 1 Small carrot, shredded (about ½ cup)**
- 3 Tbsp. light canola mayonnaise**
- Salt and pepper**
- Scoopers: Baked tortilla chips, cucumber wheels, mini whole wheat pitas, whole grain crackers**

**Combine the tuna, carrot, mayonnaise, and salt and pepper to taste in a medium bowl and mix well. To pack for school, place the tuna salad in a plastic container with a tight-fitting lid. Pack “scoopers” in separate containers. ®**

- Cut up your child’s favorite fresh fruit and include a toothpick to make eating it more fun.

- Include a small container of low-fat ranch dressing along with veggies, such as baby carrots and red pepper strips.

- Offer a low-fat cheese stick or yogurt for bone-building calcium.

- Include a variety of lean protein sources such as canned tuna, turkey and chicken.

- Pack a healthy beverage of 100 percent fruit juice, water or low-fat milk.

- Keep food cold and safe by packing an ice pack in an insulated lunch box.

### Lunch Box-Ready Recipes

“Tasty tuna classics are an easy and delicious way for parents to guarantee their children are getting the nutrition they need,” Bissex said. “If you’re short on time, pouched tuna requires no draining and flavored, single-serve tuna by the can eliminates preparation.”

For more information about the numerous benefits of tuna, visit [www.tunafoundation.org](http://www.tunafoundation.org).