

Packing a Healthy Lunchbox



The Kid's Healthy Eating Plate was created as a fun and easy guide to encourage children to eat well and keep moving. The plate's guidelines emphasize variety and quality in food choices. The formula is simple: fill half your plate (or lunch box) with colorful fruits or vegetables (aim for two to three different types), one-quarter with whole grains, and the remaining quarter with healthy proteins. Healthy fats and a small amount of dairy round out a tasty meal that will fuel an active, healthy lifestyle.

Get Inspired!

- Remember two points—choices and presentation
- Save time with meal prep
- Build super snacks to fill the gaps between meals
- Send a refillable water bottle



OFFER DIFFERENT CHOICES



- Choose any 1 **fresh fruit**. For example: grapes, apple slices or rings, any melon chunks (cantaloupe, honeydew, watermelon), any berries (strawberries, blueberries, raspberries), or banana slices.
- Choose any 2 **vegetables**. For example: carrot coins or sticks, cucumber, broccoli, bell pepper strips, asparagus spears, or grape tomatoes.
- Choose any 1 **healthy protein**. For example: Beans, edamame, nuts, seeds, peanut butter, hummus, veggie burger, roasted turkey or chicken slices, or a hardboiled egg.
- Choose any 1 **whole grain**. For example: whole grain pasta, bread, and crackers, brown rice, quinoa, steel-cut oats, and other minimally-processed whole grains.
- Incorporating **dairy** (if desired). For example: unflavored milk, plain Greek yogurt, small amounts of cheese like cottage cheese, and string cheese. For dairy-free options, try soy milk and soy yogurt, which contain similar amounts of calcium, protein, and vitamin D as dairy milk.

MAKE PRESENTATION FUN ✨

- Kabobs: Cut fruits, vegetables, and proteins into cubes or small balls and insert onto a skewer with rounded or blunt edges.
- Bento boxes: Lunchboxes that contain several small divided containers are great for portion control, keeping foods separate (if child prefer foods not touching), and encouraging a variety of foods.
- Themes: Green: edamame, cucumber coins, butter lettuce rolled in a spinach wrap spread with mashed ripe avocado. Eat a Rainbow: red grape tomatoes, orange hummus, yellow cheese, green cucumbers and bell peppers, blueberries, purple grapes.
- Shapes: Cut sandwiches into triangles or smaller squares, or use cookie cutters. Mini cookie cutters can transform apples, watermelon, or cantaloupe into juicy heart or star shapes.

For more information on packing a healthy lunchbox, visit:
nutritionsource.hsph.harvard.edu/kids-healthy-lunchbox-guide/



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