

parent tips

Secrets to Making Healthy and Fun School Lunches

Make a healthy lunch that your kids will look forward to eating.



Pick a theme

Tap into your kids' creative side by following a theme.

- **The dip:** Cut a baked chicken breast into strips, and pack them with honey mustard for dipping. Add carrots and broccoli to dip in fat-free or low-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:** Let your child build healthy burritos or tacos with: whole-wheat tortillas, lettuce, fat-free or low-fat sour cream, salsa, brown rice, and beans (not refried).

Keep it interesting

Pack a small amount of many foods. Use lots of containers or a bento-type lunch box to keep things interesting. Bento boxes are lunch boxes with lots of small containers or places for different types of food. They're a fun way to offer healthy foods. Cut sandwiches into fun shapes, add colorful fruits and vegetables in different sizes, and pack yummy dips such as fat-free or low-fat yogurt or hummus.

Skip the white bread

Mix it up. Use whole-grain breads, pitas, and tortillas. And try new fillings.

- 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 kid's favorite veggies. Add hummus for flavor.
- Spread pizza sauce on a whole-wheat tortilla, add low-fat or fat-free mozzarella cheese, then melt, roll, and slice.

Mix up the sides

Go past pretzels!

- Dip apple slices in honey.
- Pack snap peas, sliced bell peppers, or cucumbers for color and crunch!
- Add some variety with air-popped, low-fat popcorn.

Don't forget—juice and sodas can be high in sugar and calories. Instead, pack water or fat-free or low-fat milk.

We Can! is a program from the National Institutes of Health that offers resources for parents, caregivers and communities to help children 8-13 years old stay at a healthy weight through eating right, increasing physical activity, and reducing screen time.

To learn more, go to <http://wecan.nhlbi.nih.gov> or call 1-866-35-WECAN.

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