



Lunchbox Makeover!

10 tips for packing a healthy lunch for kids.

1. **Choose 1% or fat-free milk.** Milk is by far the largest source of saturated fat in children's diets. Choosing 1% or fat free is an important strategy for keeping children's hearts healthy and arteries clear.
2. **Leave the cheese off sandwiches, unless it's low fat or fat free.** Though cheese provides calcium, it is the second leading source of artery-clogging fat in kid's diets. Healthier sources of calcium include low or fat free cheese, low fat yogurt, and calcium fortified orange juice.
3. **Switch to low fat luncheon meats.** Supermarkets sell many low fat or fat free brands of chicken breast, turkey breast, ham and roast beef.
4. **Include at least one serving of fruit in every lunch.** Try serving fruit in different ways whole, cut into slices, cubed, or with yogurt or dipping sauce.
5. **Put veggies, like tomato, cucumber, onion, peppers, onto sandwiches.** Eating fruits and vegetables reduces your child's chances of heart disease, cancer, blindness and stroke later in life.
6. **Use whole grain bread instead of white bread for sandwiches.** Choose breads that list "whole wheat" as the first ingredient. (Most multi-grain, rye, oatmeal and pumpernickel breads in the U.S. are not whole grain)
7. **Limit cookies, snack cakes, doughnuts, brownies and other sweet baked goods.** Sweet baked goods are the second leading source of sugar and the fourth leading source of saturated fat in American's diets. Low fat baked goods can help cut heart damaging saturated fat from your child's diet, but even fat free sweets can crowd out healthier foods like fruit.
8. **Pack baked chips, pretzels, breadsticks or low fat crackers instead of potato, corn, or tortilla chips made with oil or Olean.** Avoid products made with Olean, a fat substitute that can cause abdominal cramping and diarrhea and can rob your body of carotenoids and other phytochemicals that may lower the risk of cancer.
9. **If you pack juice, make sure it's 100% juice.** All fruit drinks are required to list the "% juice" on the label.
10. **Avoid sending Lunchables.** Pre packaged lunches that come with a treat and drink get 2/3 of their calories from fat and sugar. Making your own healthy alternative is as easy as packing low fat crackers, low fat lunch meat, a piece of fruit and a box of 100% fruit juice in your child's lunch box.