



Packing a Healthy Lunch

Whether you are packing lunches for yourself, your partner, or your children, there are some strategies that will make packing lunches quicker and healthier.

5 simple tips for packing healthy lunches:

1. Pack leftovers.

Healthy dinners including vegetables, whole grains, and lean protein make great leftovers that can be taken for lunch the next day. Just remember to make extra to take for lunch! Also, some leftovers like cooked chicken breast can be chopped up and added to a salad or sliced and made into a sandwich. Use an ice pack to keep your lunch cold until lunchtime if you don't have access to a fridge. Try heating soups up in the morning and taking them with you in a thermos if you don't have a way to heat them up at lunchtime.

2. Make half your lunch fruits and vegetables.

This could include a salad, cut fresh vegetables and fruit, a hearty vegetable soup, or vegetables on a sandwich. Get creative!



3. Pack fresh fruit.

Apples, pears, peaches, plums, oranges, and bananas are perfect for sack lunches since they are already packaged in their skin, rind, or peel—no preparation is required! Strawberries, blueberries, and cherries are also great in sack lunches but need to be washed and put in a container. For kids, slice apples and cut oranges so the fruit is easier for them to eat.

4. Add lean protein.

Include low-fat dairy foods like yogurt, milk, or a cheese stick in your lunch to increase the protein and calcium. Try mixing up your protein by packing beans, hummus, chicken, turkey, seafood, or lean beef or pork. Getting enough protein at lunchtime will help you feel full and satisfied.



5. Include healthy snack foods.

Fruit rolls, cookies, and bags of chips are common sack lunch additions that satisfy cravings for sweet and salty foods. Instead of fruit rolls or cookies, try adding fresh fruit, dried fruit, or 100% fruit leather to satisfy your sweet tooth. Healthier options than bags of chips are cut fresh vegetables with hummus or low fat dip, whole grain crackers, or vegetable chips—these should provide some satisfying crunch in your sack lunch. These foods also make great snacks to pack with your lunch for a morning or afternoon snack.

Packing healthy lunches for you or your family ensures that you will be full, satisfied, and have plenty of energy for your afternoon activities.