

TIPS FOR PACKING A HEALTHY SCHOOL LUNCH

INCORPORATE ALL FOOD GROUPS

A balanced diet includes all of the food groups. Use MyPlate as a visual to help you structure what should go into your child's lunch. Luckily, there are so many different ways to enjoy each food group.

GET THE KIDS INVOLVED

Give your kids healthy food options from each food group and let them make the final decisions on what goes in their lunch.



Take your child grocery shopping with you and let them have a say (to a certain extent) in what goes into the cart. This promotes feelings of responsibility and empowerment.

Designate a part of your kitchen as the "lunch packing station" and spend some time there with your kids the night before to get lunch ready for the next day.



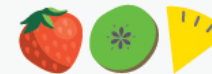
ENCOURAGE HYDRATION

It's recommended that school-aged kids drink between 6-8 cups of water a day (even more in hot weather or if their activity level is high).



Let your child pick out their favorite water bottle and encourage them to drink the whole thing at least twice at school. They'll be more inclined to do it if they feel like they are completing a challenge!

If the "flavor" of water is too boring for them, throw in a few pieces of frozen fruit to sweeten it up and keep it cooler.



MAKE YOUR OWN SNACKS & LIMIT PROCESSED ONES

Kids rely on snacks to keep their energy up, but the type of snack is important to consider. Packaged snacks tend to lack important nutrients and can be high in sugar, sodium and saturated fats. Take control of what is in your kids' snacks by making them yourself!

NO BAKE ENERGY BITES



ANTS ON A LOG



FRUIT LEATHERS



YOGURT COVERED RAISINS



TURN HEALTHY FOODS INTO FUN FOODS

Use cookie cutters to make shapes out of bread, deli meat, cheese, or a melon-baller for fruit.



Use kid-friendly skewers to make colorful food kebabs.

Create a lunch theme for the day and have all of the foods in their lunch relate to the theme (i.e. pirate theme, rainbow theme, etc).



FRUIT

Fresh, frozen, dried, canned, baked (think apple chips!) or pureed.



VEGETABLES

Fresh, frozen, or baked (think kale chips!)



LEAN PROTEIN

Baked chicken, deli meats, hard boiled eggs, beans or nuts (make sure you're aware of nut allergy regulations at your child's school).



LOW-FAT DAIRY

Milk, cheese or yogurt.



WHOLE GRAINS

Pita, sandwich bread, tortillas, wraps, and pastas.

