

Healthy lunches: Fuel for school

Eating a healthy lunch every day helps kids stay strong and focused. It's good for their bodies and their teeth. Kids who eat well can pay better attention in class and have more energy.

Over 40% of elementary school kids bring lunch from home. But studies show most of these lunches don't include all five food groups: fruits, vegetables, grains, protein, and dairy. Only 27% had at least three groups.¹

Making healthy lunches that kids like can be hard, but it's important. The right foods give energy and help stop cavities. There are many tasty and easy options that help kids stay healthy.

Parents and caregivers are role models. Teaching good eating habits early helps kids stay healthy for life.



Did you know?

Kids eat up to half of their daily calories at school.²



Quick bites

Pack these foods to help your child stay full and focused:

- **Dairy**—Low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese have lots of calcium. Check labels to avoid too much sugar or fat.
- **Protein**—Turkey, chicken, roast beef, or cheese are good choices. Use whole grain bread and add lettuce or tomato.
- **Fruits and veggies**—Grapes, apple slices, orange pieces, celery, and baby carrots are great lunchbox snacks.
- **Drinks**—Water with fluoride and low-fat milk are best. Skip soda and sugary juice drinks.



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1. Hubbard, KL et al., "What's in Children's Backpacks: Foods Brought from Home," Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics 114, no. 9 (2014): 1424–431. 2. Pew Health Group and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, "Out of Balance: A Look at Snack Foods in Secondary Schools Across the States," web.