



Food For Thought

Healthy Ideas for Preschoolers

Lunch to Go

Lunch often tops children's list of things they like most about school. However, for parents lunch can be a dreaded chore, especially if the children want to carry their lunch.

Packing school lunches is time-consuming and can be frustrating because your child may not always like the foods you pack.

Get Kids Involved

One of the best ways to ensure kids will eat what you pack is to include them in the entire process. Start with letting them decide if they will use a lunch box, insulated bag, or paper sack. Let them select the box or bag they will use.

Work with your child to make a list of foods that they want to include in their lunch. You can help guide the list to be sure it includes only foods that are both safe to pack and contribute to a healthy diet.

Take the kids to the grocery store to purchase the food on the list for their lunches. When you get home have them help you store the foods.

When it is time to prepare the lunches have them help with preparing and packaging the food.

What to Pack

When packing lunches keep the Food Guide Pyramid in mind. Pack foods from at least four of the five food groups.

Bread, Cereal, Rice, and Pasta Group

- Bread, whole wheat, rye, raisin
- Pita
- Bagel
- Tortilla
- English muffin
- Rolls
- Trail mixes



Vegetables

- Celery
- Baby carrots
- Cucumber spears
- Green beans
- Cherry tomatoes
- Broccoli
- Cauliflower



Fruits

- Melon cubes, orange wedges, kiwi slices, pineapple cubes
- Grapes, bananas
- Applesauce
- Single serving size canned fruit
- Single serving fruit juice
- Dried fruit, raisins, apricots



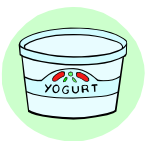
Meat, Poultry, Fish, Eggs, Dried Beans and Nuts

- Lean meat
- Hard cooked eggs
- Chicken drumstick
- Peanut butter
- Soup
- Leftover casserole



Milk, Yogurt and Cheese

- Cheese cubes, String cheese
- Yogurt
- Cottage cheese
- Single serving pudding

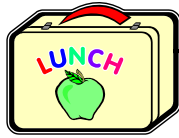


Dessert or Snack (optional)

- Pretzels
- Cookies
- Frosted cereal
- Granola bar



Keeping Lunch Safe



- Lunch boxes and containers used for packing food should be washed each day in hot soapy water.
- If paper bags are used, a new one should be used each day. Do not use the same paper bag two days in a row.
- To keep a lunch cold until time to eat, freeze the sandwich or juice container or use a small commercial freezer pack.
- To avoid soggy bread, spread with a thin layer of softened butter.
- Be sure to wrap the sandwich well in plastic wrap, aluminum foil or plastic sandwich bag.
- If you will be packing soups, invest in a small thermos to keep it hot and safe.



Nobby Apple Cake



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|-----|------------------------|-----|----------------------------|
| 3 | Tablespoons shortening | 1 | teaspoon baking powder |
| 1 | cup sugar | 1 | cup flour |
| 1 | egg, beaten | 3 | cups diced apples |
| 1/2 | teaspoon cinnamon | 1 | teaspoon vanilla |
| 1/2 | teaspoon nutmeg | 1/4 | cup chopped nuts, optional |
| 1/2 | teaspoon salt | | |

Mix shortening and sugar until well blended; add egg and mix well. Add dry ingredients and stir. Then add the apples, vanilla and nuts and mix until well blended. Pour into a greased 8-inch square pan. Bake at 350° F. for 40 to 50 minutes.

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