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## What to Pack: Lunchbox Ideas

### General Recommendations:

Unless your child's lunch will be kept in a refrigerator at school, make sure you have a cool pack in the lunchbox to keep foods fresh. Proteins, dressings and dairy, especially, must be kept cold to keep them from spoiling.

- **Proteins:** Use a variety of lean meats, such as sliced turkey or chicken breast. Other good sources of protein are peanut butter, low-fat cheese, hummus, or hard-boiled eggs.
- **Grains:** Use whole-wheat bread for sandwiches. If your child is tired of sandwich bread, try whole-wheat pocket or pita bread, tortilla wraps, rice cakes or grain salads, such as couscous.
- **Dressing:** Try mustard, light mayonnaise or low-fat salad dressing as a spread. If your child likes butter, try tub margarine. Salsa also makes a great dressing.
- **Fruit:** Use any fresh fruit in season, applesauce, fruit cocktail cups (packed in fruit juice not sugar syrup), or 100% fruit juice boxes. Keep lunch interesting by choosing different fruits on occasion --for example, star fruit, kiwi or papaya.
- **Vegetables:** Use all the colors! Pack an assortment of carrot sticks, cherry tomatoes, green and red pepper strips, celery with peanut butter, broccoli or cauliflower florets with light dressing. You can mix up a medley of cooked vegetables and stuff them in pocket bread. If you add lettuce to a sandwich, remember to dry it well after washing it or you'll have a soggy sandwich.
- **Dairy products:** Jazz up low-fat yogurt with fresh fruit or low-fat granola. Send string cheese.

### Snack ideas:

- Fresh fruit or dried fruit
- Whole-wheat pretzels, crackers or rice cakes
- Low-fat yogurt
- Cottage cheese
- Instead of potato chips, try baked chips, air-popped popcorn or whole-grain crackers.
- Instead of candy or cookies, offer trail mix or granola.
- Peanut butter and celery sticks
- Baby carrots or carrot sticks

### Beverages:

- Water or seltzer water
- Low-fat (1% or skim) milk for children over two, whole milk for children under two
- 100 % fruit juice
- Stay away from sweetened soft drinks, fruit punch, and juices that do not say "100% fruit juice"