Packing Healthy Lunches

Whether you’re packing an office lunch or a school lunch, healthy items can set you up for success. Often, lunches can consist of fast food, oversized portions, or sometimes nothing at all.

This month, focus more on making the lunches you pack for yourself and possibly your family as healthy as possible. Try one or all of the substitutes listed below. Best choices include dark leafy greens, 100% whole grains, lean protein, and of course, the occasional treat!

Tips for Packing Healthy Lunches That You Want to Eat!

When you grocery shop for lunch items, choose packaged and processed foods sparingly. Consuming these items are the easiest way to overload on bad fats, preservatives, sugar, and sodium.

- Make your own 100-calorie packs. Those pre-packaged containers of chips, cookies, and the like are expensive and can be calorie loaded with fat, sugar, or salt. Instead, buy lower-calorie baked chips, pretzels, graham crackers, etc. in larger packages and place them in individual bags yourself to control portion sizes.

- Last night’s dinner = yummy lunch. Cold pasta or soup/stew can make great lunch options. Use leftover chicken to top a salad; vegetables can be stuffed into a pita pocket with a light spread of mustard or hummus.

- Try Trail Mix. If you find yourself hungry before your lunch hour, grab a handful of homemade trail mix. Mix together nuts, whole grain cereals, and dried fruit like raisins, apricots, and prunes. Just a handful should tide you over until lunch!

- Stick with water. Water and low-fat/non-fat milk are the best drink options. You can try fruit juice on occasion, but make sure to use 100% fruit juice.

- Prepare the night before. Packing lunches for you and your family should not be an additional chore. As you clean up dinner, start setting aside items that could be packed for lunch. Experiment with different salads using leftover chicken. Add light mayo, grapes, and celery for a crunchy chicken salad sandwich. Leftover steak can go into a wrap, salad, or sandwich!

Eating Lunch Out

Sometimes lunch takes place in a restaurant or fast food outlet. Use these tips to make wise decisions at lunch to help make your dining experience successful.

- Skip the mayo and cheese on your sandwich and ask for double tomato and lettuce.

- Don’t go for an oversize meal: you’ll end up paying more for food you don’t need.

- Start with a salad or broth-based soup. This will help curb your appetite.

- Ask for sauces and salad dressings on the side and use them sparingly.

- Portion control is important when dining out; if you do opt for a splurge item, try a single serving or small size.

Healthified Peach Cobbler

 Feeling peachy?

-From eatbetteramerica.com

Ingredients

- 1/4 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- 1 cup fat-free milk
- 3 Tbsp Canola oil
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1 cup Bisquick Heart Smart Mix
- 1 29 oz. can peach slices in light syrup, drained or 4 cups fresh, peeled, peach slices
- Vanilla reduced-fat ice cream (optional)

Directions

1. Heat oven to 375°. In an un-greased 8-inch glass baking dish, combine Bisquick mix and cinnamon. Stir in milk with oil with wire whisk or fork until blended.

2. In medium bowl, mix sugar, peaches and lemon juice. Spoon over batter in baking dish.

3. Bake 50 to 55 minutes or until golden brown. Let stand about 20 minutes before serving. Serve warm with ice cream! Refrigerate any leftovers.

Nutrition Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serving Size: 1/6 recipe</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calories: 280</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Vitamin C: 4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcium: 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron: 6%</td>
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</table>
Pack English muffins topped with low-fat cheese and pepperoni as a pizza swap.

Kids love to dip their food! Pack cut-up vegetables like carrots, broccoli, peppers, and celery with a fun dressing or dip.

If your child eats lunch in the cafeteria, look over the menu together. Recommend items that are healthier. Help them pick out their lunch choices before they get to school.

Use your lunch break to get healthy! With an hour to eat, there is plenty of time left over. Use it or lose it!

**Plan Ahead**

Bring your lunch, workout shoes, and comfortable clothing to work with you. This will save you time and helps keep you motivated.

**Stick to it**

Designate three days a week for lunch-time workouts. Ask a co-worker if they would like to work out with you.

### Walk it Out

Take a brisk walk outside, or if the weather is bad, head to the mall or local shopping area. Even a 10 minute walk boosts brain power and your metabolism!

**Stick to it**

Take an exercise band or light weights with you to work. You can use these in your office or outside. If you are a member of Baun, head to the gym during your break.

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**Lunch Box Makeover**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Typical Item</th>
<th>Nutrition Upgrade</th>
<th>Reasons for change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bologna on white bread</td>
<td>Lean turkey breast on 100% wheat</td>
<td>Less fat, more fiber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayonnaise</td>
<td>Lettuce and mustard</td>
<td>Less fat, fewer calories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potato Chips</td>
<td>Vegetables and light dressing</td>
<td>Less fat, plus vegetables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit in syrup</td>
<td>Fresh fruit</td>
<td>Less sugar, fewer calories</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandwich cookies</td>
<td>Homemade trail mix</td>
<td>Less sugar, fat and more fiber</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Brown Bag Bean Tortillas**

**You will need:**
- 1 can black beans
- 1 cup salsa
- 1 Tbsp ground cumin
- 1 Tbsp chili powder
- 8 flour tortillas (10-inch)
- 1 cup shredded Monterey jack cheese

1. Rinse beans; drain well.
2. Combine beans, salsa, cumin, and chili powder in large pan. Cook over medium-high heat for 10 minutes, mashing beans slightly with spoon. Add a little water if mixture becomes too dry.
3. Spoon bean mixture into tortillas. Top with cheese. Ensure both ends are tucked in; wrap in plastic wrap, refrigerate, and lunch is ready to be packed!

Serves: 8

**Pizza Stuffed Pockets**

**You will need:**
- 1/4 cup chopped turkey pepperoni and/or mushrooms
- 1/4 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 2 Tbsp pizza sauce
- 1 6-inch pocket-type pita bread

1. In a bowl, mix together pepperoni, mozzarella cheese, pizza sauce, and any other vegetables you would like.
2. With a knife, cut a slit around one side of the pita pocket wide enough to spoon the filling in. Spread apart the sides of the pocket and stuff with cheese mixture. Press to close and wrap in a layer of foil.
3. Bake at 400° for 15 minutes or until cheese has melted. Refrigerate and pack in a lunch bag for tomorrow!

Serves: 1