

Quick-reference Lunch Foods

Print this list and read it with your children. Ask them to circle the foods they'd like to see in their lunchboxes.

Breads		Spreads & Condiments		Fillings		Fruits (Dried and Fresh)			
bagel baguette bread sticks crackers English muffin pita bread rice cakes rolls sandwich bread tortillas/wraps		butter avocado (mashed) banana (mashed) cream cheese honey hummus jam ketchup mayonnaise/mustard peanut butter pesto pizza or tomato sauce pumpkin butter		carrots (shredded) tomatoes chicken chicken salad egg salad hard boiled egg hot dogs lettuce sliced avocado sliced cucumber lunch meat sprouts tofu tuna salad		apples apricots pears avocado bananas blueberries cherries cranberries (dried) dates pears raisins		grapefruit grapes kiwi melon nectarines oranges peaches pineapple plums raspberries strawberries	
Vegetables			Treats		Other Grains				
asparagus beets bell peppers broccoli brussel sprouts cabbage carrots cauliflower celery cucumbers eggplant green beans			lettuce mushrooms shelling peas snap peas spinach squash sweet potatoes yams zucchini green salad		apple crisp applesauce baked chips dried fruit fruit bar granola homemade cookies notes from home popcorn pretzels stickers trail mix yogurt with fruit		pasta rice couscous oatmeal cereal (Cheerios/Shreddies)		

Tips for Reducing Your Workload

- Try packing lunches the night before and keeping them in the refrigerator overnight
- Make your children responsible for adding the ice pack and placing their own lunchbox near the door or in the car
- Teach older children how to make nutritious, waste-free lunches and then let them make their own lunches
- Older children can also be responsible for washing their reusable lunch containers or rinsing them and putting them in the dishwasher
- Children of all ages can take responsibility for putting recyclables in the recycle bin

Want to reduce food waste?

Here are some things you can do...

- Cut up fruits and vegetables. Children often take 1 or 2 bites out of an uncut apple or banana and throw the rest away. To avoid this, pack cut-up fruits and vegetables in a reusable container. Your child can take a few bites and save the rest for later.
- Pack drinks in reusable containers. Children cannot reseal juice boxes, cans, or pouches. Often they drink half (or less) and throw the rest away. Send a small amount to school in a reusable container.
- As part of our Boomerang Lunch Program children bring home lunch leftovers. Looking at leftover lunches is a great way to get information about your children's lunch preferences. Find out why certain foods have come back uneaten. Did your child not like it? Was he/she not hungry enough to eat everything in the lunchbox? Did he/she share someone else's lunch instead? Maintain a dialogue without criticizing. Consider making a list of foods that your child likes to eat for lunch and update it regularly with input from your child.
- Encourage your children to help plan, prepare and pack their own lunches. They're more likely to eat a meal that they've helped prepare.

