

Bringing Lunch from Home

- Provide foods from several food groups (dairy, meat, vegetable, fruit, and grains. Students purchasing school lunch must choose at least 3 of these components, with the thought that 3 is good (required), 4 is better and 5 is best.
- Keep it safe. Only use those foods, which will not spoil, in the lunch box. Use thermal lunch bags and chill items before packing. Keep it interesting and colorful. Use a variety of textures. Teens like foods easier to eat, as socializing is very important during the meal. (A cut up apple might be preferred to chomping down on a big apple at lunch.)

Food Ideas:

- Include grains by making sandwiches on whole wheat bread or whole-wheat rolls. Whole wheat tortillas can be used to make the sandwich a “wrap”.
- Fill sandwiches with turkey, chicken, lean roast beef, low fat lunchmeat, and low fat cheese or bean fillings. Hummus makes nutritious meat alternate. Other bean spreads can be made using cooked black bean, pinto beans, etc.
- Whole grain bagel with hummus, tuna or chicken salad or nut butter.
- Pre-packaged 100% whole grain cereals can be an alternate to chips in the lunch box. (Raisin bran, cheerios, bran flakes, low fat granola, etc.)
- Pre-packaged baked potato and tortilla chips, and whole grain pretzels
- Packaged baked seeds and nut mixes.
- Fruits and vegetables-think bite size. Cut up apples (dip in OJ to prevent browning), bananas, grapes, and cherries, cut up cantaloupe, plums, peaches, and pears. Make carrots sticks, celery sticks, zucchini sticks)
- Cherry or grape tomatoes
- Dried fruit-raisins, golden raisins, dried cherries, apricots and other dried fruit.
- Juices-shelf stable paper cartons. Use 100% juice. *
- Individual packaged cheese, string cheese.
- Shelf stable low fat milk*
- Yogurt*
- Once in a while add a treat but make it count: oatmeal raisin cookies, date nut bars, etc.

*Freeze beverages or yogurt to maintain temperature. Freezing these items will also help keep the lunch box cool.

