



Packing School Lunches

Packing school lunches that follow a healthy eating pattern means providing a variety of foods including: Vegetables, fruit, whole grains, and protein foods. Not all protein foods are alike as only some are good sources of calcium. Calcium is important for children to develop strong bones and reduce the risk of osteoporosis later in life.¹ Milk products - like milk, yogurt and cheese - are among the very few foods that are naturally rich in calcium, which is also well absorbed by the body.² Milk products are also among the highest quality sources of protein.³

To plan a school lunch (or any meal),

- ▶ offer one or more items from each of the foods grouped below AND
- ▶ include a **bone building** food to provide calcium and protein, both needed for children to develop strong bones.

Offer item(s) from each of the food groups

Vegetables & Fruit

- cut carrots, celery
- snap peas
- bell pepper slices
- cherry tomatoes
- cucumber slices
- mushrooms
- cauliflower, broccoli
- lettuce, spinach, kale
- salsa
- vegetable soup
- canned fruit
- applesauce
- grapes
- cut melon
- apple, orange, pear, banana
- peach, nectarine, plum
- berries
- pineapple, kiwi, mango
- avocado

Whole Grains

- bread, bun, bagel, wrap, flatbread, pita
- bannock
- oats/oatmeal
- cooked quinoa, barley, buckwheat, bulgur, amaranth, farro, freekeh
- cooked rice, wild rice
- cooked pasta, couscous
- granola
- cereal
- muffin
- granola/cereal bars
- crackers
- rice cakes/crackers
- pancakes, waffles

Proteins

- milk
- cheese stick/string
- sliced/cubed hard cheese
- cottage cheese
- yogurt
- kefir
- fortified soy beverage

- chicken, turkey
- beef, pork, wild meat
- tuna, salmon, other fish, shellfish*
- hard-boiled egg
- roasted deli meat
- chickpeas, beans, lentils
- tofu
- egg salad
- hamburger patty
- veggie patty (made with legumes/vegetable protein)
- hummus
- nuts/seeds*
- nut/seed butter*

Bone builders = calcium + protein



*Note: when packing lunches keep in mind classroom or school food allergy policy.

Many nutritious lunch foods contain 2 or more foods from the lists above: Yogurt parfait, pizza, salad, sandwich/wrap/pita, tacos/burritos/quesadillas, spaghetti, chili, stew, soup, casserole etc.

SOURCES: 1. Weaver CM et al. The National Osteoporosis Foundation's position statement on peak bone mass development and lifestyle factors: a systematic review and implementation recommendations. *Osteoporosis Int* 2016; 27: 1281-1386. 2. Weaver CM. Should dairy be recommended as part of a healthy vegetarian diet? *Point. Am J Clin Nutr* 2009;89(suppl)1634S-7S. 3. Phillips SM et al. The role of milk- and soy-based protein in support of muscle protein synthesis and muscle protein accretion in young and elderly persons. *J Am Coll Nutr* 2009;28(4):343-354.



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