

Pick & Pack a Healthy LUNCH

"CHEWS" FOODS THAT KEEP YOU SATISFIED UNTIL DINNER

Supersized fast food lunches and large sit-down or buffet lunches feed your hunger. They supersize your waistline, too. A better option is to prepare your own lunch with fresh and healthier foods. This lets you eat what you like and control calories, salt, fat, and sugar.

PEANUT BUTTER AGAIN?

Peanut butter is actually a good choice. Two tablespoons on whole-wheat bread provides both protein and dietary fiber and keeps you feeling full until dinner. Add a medium apple and you're good to go. Other healthy sandwich options are tuna fish, sliced eggs, reduced-fat cheese and lean, fresh meats spruced up with avocado, greens, sliced cucumbers, onions and tomatoes. For a change, use pita bread or whole-grain tortillas instead of bread.

LAST NIGHT'S LEFTOVERS

Fido may lick his chops at that last slice of turkey, but you are better off giving the dog a bone and saving the food for tomorrow's lunch. If salad and/or veggies are left, take them, too. Plan ahead. Make enough food for dinner and for lunch the next day. Or cook chili, rice and beans, and spaghetti sauce, etc. in bulk. Store these in single-serving containers. Refrigerate or freeze them for ready-to-go future lunches.



Action Step

Set aside time in the evening to pack lunches and snacks. They'll be ready to take in the morning.



ITEMS TO STOCK FOR EASY AND HEALTHY LUNCHES

- Whole-grain breads, pastas, and cereals
- Fruits galore – Apples, apricots, bananas, berries, grapes, oranges, peaches, pears, plums, and pineapples
- Vegetables – Avocado, broccoli, carrots, salad greens, spinach, squash, sweet potatoes, and tomatoes
- Freshly cooked lean beef and pork; game meats; chicken and turkey; and fish and shellfish. Canned tuna and salmon.
- Unsalted almonds, peanuts, walnuts, sunflower seeds, and peanut butter
- Chick peas, kidney beans, lentils, split peas and homemade or low-sodium soups made with these. Other low-sodium soups.
- Fat-free (skim) or low-fat (1%) milk or buttermilk; fat-free, low-fat, or reduced-fat cheese, fat-free or low-fat yogurt or yogurt smoothies
- Frozen fruit for smoothies
- Canned and dried fruit, such as raisins and prunes
- Single-serving frozen meals with less than 800 milligrams of sodium
- 100 percent juice boxes (to keep lunch cool)