



HEALTHY LUNCHES FROM HOME

Support and Promote the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*

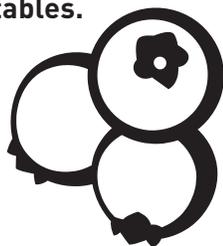
Children need to eat a healthy lunch to fuel them for the rest of the school day.

If your child eats school lunch he or she is being offered healthy food. Your school foodservice director has to follow strict guidelines about what kinds of food and what size portions can be served. These guidelines include recommendations for calories, fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, sodium, and sugar that are based on the Dietary Reference Intakes (DRIs).

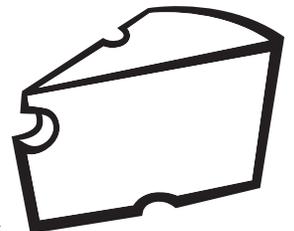
Do you know what a healthy lunch should include? Although parents don't have to follow a strict set of guidelines like school foodservice directors do, if you want your child's lunch to fuel his or her brain and body for the day, and to be filling, nutritious, and great-tasting, follow these recommendations and suggestions based on the *Michigan Nutrition Standards*.

HOW TO PACK A HEALTHY LUNCH

- 1. Include whole grains.** If your child eats bread, tortillas, crackers, rice, cereal or pasta for lunch, at least half of the time it should be whole grain. More than half is even better. Read food labels and buy foods where a whole grain is listed first on the ingredient list.
- 2. Include a lean source of protein.** Examples include lean meats, eggs, fish, tofu, peanut butter or other nut butters, or legumes such as refried beans, black beans or garbanzo beans.
- 3. Include one or two fruits or vegetables.** This includes fresh, whole, dried, canned or frozen fruits or vegetables and small servings (8 oz or less) of 100% juice.



- 4. Include a high-calcium food or beverage such as milk or low-fat cheese.** The easiest way to do this is for your child to buy white or flavored milk at school. You can also pack milk from home but be sure to keep it cold. Other low-fat dairy options include low-fat yogurt, low-fat cheese such as string cheese, or low-fat cottage cheese.



- 5. Keep food safe.** Keep hot foods such as soup hot in an insulated thermos and keep cold foods, such as yogurt, cold with an ice pack or by freezing the food first. Remind your child to wash his/her hands before eating and/or include an antibacterial hand wipe, in a closed container, inside the sack lunch.



QUICK-TO-FIX HEALTHY SACK LUNCHES

- 1. Sandwich on a Stick.** Onto colorful toothpicks skewer chunks of cooked chicken or low-fat deli meat, marinated tofu cubes, low-fat cheese, whole grain bread, cherry tomatoes, peppers or any other fruit or vegetable your child likes. Include low-fat or fat-free white or chocolate milk or 100% juice to drink.
- 2. Pizza Sandwich.** Slice a bagel or English muffins in half. Top with a little pasta or pizza sauce. Sprinkle with shredded low-fat mozzarella cheese and vegetarian pizza toppings such as chopped mushrooms or green pepper. Heat in the microwave until cheese melts. Wrap up in plastic wrap or pack in a plastic container for kids' lunches. Include a piece of kiwi fruit on the side, and water or low-fat or fat-free white or chocolate milk to drink.
- 3. Rice Cake Stackers.** Spread 2 whole grain apple-cinnamon or chocolate-flavored rice cakes with peanut butter. Top one side with dried apricots, raisins, or dried cherries. Put the other rice cake on top. Include a small bag of cucumber slices on the side, and water or low-fat or fat-free white or chocolate milk to drink.
- 4. Portable Parfait.** In the bottom of a small food-grade plastic container, spoon about 3-4 ounces of low-fat fruit-flavored yogurt. Top with (in this order) apple chunks, orange wedges or mandarin oranges, and pineapple chunks, then shredded coconut and/or chopped nuts. Shake or stir lightly to mix when ready to eat. Include a small bag of peanuts and water or low-fat or fat-free white or chocolate milk.
- 5. Bugs in a Rug.** Spread almond butter onto a whole grain wrap. Add chopped apple and dried cherries. Roll up tight. Include a small bag of carrot sticks on the side and water or low-fat or fat-free white or chocolate milk to drink.
- 6. Hawaiian Chicken Sandwich.** Spread a light layer of BBQ sauce onto two slices of whole grain bread or a whole grain sandwich bun. Top with leftover cooked chicken breast or low-sodium chicken breast lunch meat and drained pineapple rings. Include a cup of cherry tomatoes on the side and water or low-fat or fat-free white or chocolate milk to drink.
- 7. Make Your Own Lunch-in-a-box.** Into a food-grade plastic container with compartments, put 1-2 kinds of whole grain crackers, a small handful of cheese chunks, and some cubed low-fat deli meat. Add a small bunch of grapes, or a handful of mini carrots, a 100% fruit roll up and a 100% juice box.
- 8. Walking Salad.** In the bottom of a small food-grade plastic container, squirt a little low-fat salad dressing. Top with (in this order) whole cherry tomatoes, shredded carrot, lettuce or mixed greens, shredded low-fat cheese, hard-boiled egg slices and croutons. Stir to mix when ready to eat. Include a whole grain muffin, roll or tortilla on the side and water or low-fat or fat-free white or chocolate milk to drink.
- 9. Almost a Meal Snack Mix.** Mix together any combination of nuts, whole grain cereal, whole grain crackers or pretzels, popcorn, and dried fruit. Add a carton of low-fat or fat-free white or chocolate milk and you have a meal!
- 10. Mexican Roll Ups.** Spread refried beans or mashed beans onto a whole grain tortilla. Top with a thin layer of salsa. Sprinkle shredded cheddar or Mexican-style cheese on top, then add chopped lettuce, green onion, red and/or green pepper, and any other vegetables you like. Include a banana or an apple on the side, and water or low-fat or fat-free white or chocolate milk to drink.
- 11. A-Little-Sweet Fruit and Cheese Kebab.** On a toothpick, skewer chunks of cheese, mini marshmallows, cantaloupe and grapes. Include fresh celery sticks and a whole grain fruit muffin on the side and water or low-fat or fat-free white or chocolate milk to drink.
- 12. Blueberry Roll Ups.** Spread a thin layer of light mayo or mustard on a whole grain tortilla. Top with fresh spinach leaves and a few slices of deli turkey or some leftover cooked chicken or turkey. Top with a handful of fresh blueberries and roll up tight to eat. Include more fresh blueberries or some red and green pepper strips on the side and water or low-fat or fat-free white or chocolate milk to drink.
- 13. Crunchy Tuna Your Way.** Drain water-packed tuna and add light mayo to make it spreadable. Add one or more of the following: sliced water chestnuts, sliced apple, uncooked ramen noodles, toasted almonds, onion, celery, dried fruit—and whatever else you wish! Spoon the tuna and veggies into a whole grain wrap or onto two slices of whole grain bread. Include a pear or banana on the side and water or low-fat or fat-free white or chocolate milk.
- 14. Meal in an Apple.** Core and slice an apple into wedges using an apple wedger. Spread peanut butter on the inside of each wedge. Put the apple back together and store in a plastic bag. Include a small bag of popped popcorn or baked whole grain chips on the side and water or low-fat or fat-free white or chocolate milk to drink.
- 15. Middle Eastern Wrap.** Spread hummus onto a whole grain wrap or tortilla. Top with vegetables of your choice, e.g. shredded carrot, peppers, onions, celery, etc. Roll and cut in half. Store each half in a snack-size plastic bag so they stay wrapped. Include an orange or a few clementines on the side and water or low-fat or fat-free white or chocolate milk to drink.
- 16. Color Day Lunch.** Pick a color and fill your child's lunch with foods of that color, e.g. if you pick red, pack strawberries, cherry tomatoes, a tomato wrap with red pepper hummus, a red fruit roll up and tomato juice.