

... FOR THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF YOU AND YOUR FAMILY

THE BENEFITS OF PACKING A LUNCH

PACKING LUNCHES IS ON THE RISE

According to the NPD Group, a leading marketing research company that measures consumer trends, "Adult Americans ate 8.5 billion brown-bag lunches in 2007." This number continues to grow as more Americans bring their lunch to work and more parents send a packed lunch to school.

The survey shows the top two reasons why Americans pack a lunch, are to save money and for health and nutrition benefits.

Diet, convenience, taste, and environmental reasons all play unique roles that are affecting American's eating behaviors. So why do it?



PACKING A LUNCH WITH THE BUDGET IN MIND

Owner and operator of www.mybargainbuddy.com, Karen Hoxmeier, says you could save up to \$1,300 a year if you spend \$5 a day eating out. By spending the extra time to make your own lunch at home you could save a lot of money. How many times a week do you buy coffee or a snack at the machine? Bring coffee in a thermos made at home or buy healthy snacks in bulk to bring with you.

PACKING A LUNCH WITH HEALTH BENEFITS IN MIND

Packing lunches can be a great way to ensure moms and dads are giving their kids nutritious lunches at school. Below are some tips on how to make your child's lunches more exciting and healthier.

- Cut cheese into triangles, circles, or sticks.
- Use a cookie cutter on sandwiches to make shapes.
- For a change, substitute soup or salad for a sandwich.
- Layer meats, cheeses, fruits, and vegetables on a toothpick as a kabob.
- Substitute sodas with pure fruit juice, milk, or bottled water.
- Although fruits and vegetables are important to include in your child's lunch, be sure to also include a dessert item. This way, they do not feel left out or trade their food for any sugary item they can find.
- Instead of packing greasy potato chips, try crackers, popcorn, dry cereal, or trail mix.

HELPFUL TIPS

Weekend Cooking: Cooking crock-pot meals like soups and stews, are a great way to stretch your meals through the work week. Preparing meals for work during time off, can minimize the temptation of the snack machine or the fast food restaurant around the corner.



Cooking to Succeed: Involving yourself in the cooking process means you have more control over the food you eat. It's easier to control portions when you are serving yourself, versus when food is given to you at restaurants.

PACK IT WITH NUTRITION

<p>Whole Grains & Fiber</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use lean, low-sodium deli meat or hummus on 100 percent whole-grain breads, rolls, or wraps. • If your child does not like a sandwich on bread, pack whole-grain crackers or mini bagels. Whole grains have a higher fiber content, which helps keep your child full through the afternoon.
<p>Calcium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pack a low-fat dairy item such as a cheese stick or container of yogurt. • Pack low-fat pudding, soy milk, or cottage cheese.
<p>Fruits & Vegetables</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ½ cup of blueberries, raspberries, or blackberries. • Apples, bananas, or oranges. • Carrots, peas, celery, or corn.

PACK A SAFE LUNCH



1. Keep foods such as soup, chili, or stew hot by using an insulated bottle. Fill the bottle with boiling water and let it stand for a few minutes. Empty the bottle and then fill it with piping hot food. Keep the bottle closed until lunchtime.
2. Insulated, soft-sided lunch totes are best for keeping perishable food cold, but metal or plastic lunch boxes and paper bags can also be used. If using paper lunch bags, create layers by double bagging to help insulate the food. A cold source, such as a small frozen gel pack or frozen juice box, should be packed with perishable food in any type of lunch bag or box. After lunch, discard all used food packaging and paper bags. Do not reuse paper or plastic bags.
3. Freezer gel packs will keep foods cold until lunchtime, but are not recommended for all-day storage.
4. Avoid the growth of harmful bacteria by keeping food containers and thermoses very clean by washing them in soapy water each night.

RESOURCES

www.fightbac.org

www.npd.com/press/releases/press_080724.html (NPD- How Brown Bagging is Affecting Food Service Lunch.)

Susan Campbell. Living On Less: Saving Some Bread By Packing Lunch. McClatchy - Tribune Business News. Washington: Nov 17, 2008. [pages 1-2]

“10 Tips For Packing Your Child’s School Lunch.” Better Nutrition 63.9 (2001): 22. Health Source - Consumer Edition. EBSCO. Web. 19 Nov. 2009.

Kristi L. Gustafson. McClatchy - Tribune Business News. Washington: Sep 3, 2009. [pages 1-2]

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