

Packing a Safe Lunch

- Make sure to wash hands with soap and water before preparing food.
- Always prepare food using clean equipment and a clean, sanitized work area.
- Use clean plastic containers or plastic bags.
- Pre chill foods to be kept cold before packing .
- Add an ice pack to keep foods cold until lunch. Use commercial gel packs, ice cubes in a leak-proof container, or frozen juice box or water bottle.
- Remember that during field trips, pack non-perishable items. Refrigeration may not be available.
- Modify foods that may cause choking. Cut grapes and large berries smaller than 1/2". Make vegetable sticks small and narrow. Avoid hot dogs.

Examples of foods that must be kept cold:

- Sliced meat sandwich
- Tuna, egg, or chicken salad
- Milk, soft cheeses, or yogurt
- Cooked vegetables or fruits
- Cut melons
- Pasta, bean or rice dishes
- Most other perishables taken from the refrigerator

Examples of foods that don't need to stay cold:

- Cookies, crackers, or chips
- Breads and cereals
- Canned, frozen or fresh uncooked fruit or vegetables
- Dried fruit or applesauce
- Hard & cream cheese

Public Health Seattle & King County Mission Statement

Identify and promote the conditions under which all people can live within healthy communities and can achieve optimal health.

The Child Care Health Program committed to supporting safe and healthy child care to children in Seattle and King county. Child care health consultants offer nursing, mental health and nutrition consultative services and trainings to early learning and school age care providers.

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The Child Care Health Program

Pack a Sack: Packing a Healthy Lunch for Preschoolers



Public Health 
Seattle & King County



Creative Lunch Ideas

Packing a Healthy Lunch

Lunches from the home kitchen can add an element of delightful surprise for your child. They can include safe and healthy foods that are reminders of home. Lunches should contain the following foods as outlined in the Washington State Meal Pattern for Child Care:

1 serving of a grain food

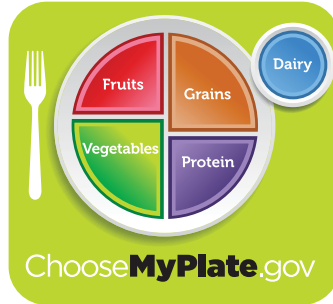
1 serving each of a vegetable and fruit

1 serving of dairy

1 serving of meat or a meat alternate, i.e. beef, fish poultry, beans, bean dip, nut butter, pumpkin or sunflower seeds

Tips for Successful Lunch Box Meals

- Include only one new food at a time in the lunch box.
- If possible, involve your child in packing the lunch.
- Pack something crisp, something chewy and something colorful.
- To reduce waste, invest in reusable plastic containers and wash/sanitize them daily.
- Remember to pack child-sized utensils, cups and some napkins.
- If the child care does not provide a beverage include 1% milk, 100% fruit juice or water.
- Insert a note in your child's lunch that says "I love you."



Sandwiches (1/2 sandwich)

(Try whole wheat bread)

- Tuna fish
- Chicken/turkey salad
- Egg salad
- Toasted Cheese w/tomato slice
- Deli lunch meats



Sandwich Substitutes

- Cheese, lunch meat, crackers or bagel chips
- Pita bread with hummus or egg salad
- Tortilla chips with bean dip and salsa
- Tortilla with cream cheese, grated carrots & cucumber
- Mini bagel with cheese, turkey, lettuce, and tomato

Vegetables (1/4 cup)

- Thinly sliced carrot sticks
- Celery w/cream cheese
- Broccoli/Cauliflower pieces
- Cucumber slices
- Zucchini rounds
- Half of ear of corn
- Jicama/radishes
- Steamed asparagus spears
- Avocado quarters
- Small container of salad dressing for dipping
- Salsa (w/chips)

Invest in small, plastic containers for fruit/veggies, dipping sauces and salad dressings.



Fruit (1/4 cup or 1/2 a piece)

- Apple
- Banana
- Berries (fresh or frozen)
- Peach/nectarine
- Melon slices
- Pear
- Kiwi
- Orange slices
- Mango chunks
- Fruit Cocktail
- Applesauce
- Grapes (red and green)

Dip fresh fruit in orange juice to keep it from turning brown.



Meat/Meat Alternates

- Deli slices (1 1/2 oz)
- (turkey, chicken, turkey ham)
- Hummus (2 Tbls)
- Bean dips /spreads (1/4 cup)
- Tuna, chicken, meat salads (1 1/2 - 2 oz of filling)
- Hard boiled egg slices (1 egg)
- Fried tofu sticks (1 oz)
- Trail Mix w/sunflower or pumpkin seeds

Salads (1/2 cup)

- Mixed fruit chunks
- Caesar salad
- Potato salad
- Coleslaw
- Rice balls/sushi
- Lettuce/spinach, dressing on side
- Black beans, corn and tomato salad
- Noodles w/shredded carrots, pea pods, broccoli chunks



Dairy

- 8 oz carton of 1% milk
- 1 oz slice of cheese or cheese sticks
- 6 oz container of yogurt
- 3/4 cup cottage cheese



Leftover Meals

(Approx. 1/2 – 3/4 cup)

Cold leftovers are best. When child care providers have to take time to microwave lunches, they cannot be sitting with the children.

- Pizza w/ sliced meat/veggies
- Chicken leg or pieces
- Lentils and rice
- Pasta white beans and veggies
- Veggie stir fry w/rice or soba noodles
- Refried rice with tofu and veggies

→ **Beware of ready-to-eat lunches: High in fat and salt, low in other nutrients, expensive, and don't meet the guidelines.**