

Build a **BALANCED** bag lunch:



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Vegetables & Fruits **Whole Grains** **Lean Protein** **1 Serving of Low-fat Dairy**

Vegetables

- Bell pepper slices
- Cherry tomatoes
- Salsa or tomato sauce
- Sugar snap peas
- Celery sticks
- Vegetable soup
- Baby carrots
- Green garden salad
- Cucumber slices
- Broccoli or cauliflower florets

Fruits

- Orange segments
- Apple
- Grape clusters
- Diced melon
- Dried fruits: raisins, apricots, apples, or cranberries
- Strawberries, raspberries, or blueberries
- Banana
- Single serving fruit or applesauce cup

Whole Grains

- Whole wheat bread, pita, bagel, or wrap
- Whole wheat or corn tortilla
- Whole wheat pasta or noodles
- Brown rice
- Popcorn
- Baked tortilla chips or whole grain pita chips
- Whole grain crackers
- Granola bar
- Whole grain cereal

Lean Protein

- Lean luncheon meats: turkey or chicken breast, lean roast beef, or lean ham
- Peanut butter
- Beans
- Hummus or bean dip
- Canned water-packed tuna
- Handful of nuts
- Hardboiled eggs

Low-fat Dairy

- Part-skim string cheese
- Low-fat cottage cheese
- Low-fat yogurt
- Slice low-fat cheese
- Low-fat or fat-free milk



Why Pack Your Lunch?

- Save money by not stopping at fast food restaurants or the convenience store
- Make more nutritious choices by controlling your portion size, amount of fat and calories, and ingredients

Easy Lunch Ideas

- ▶ Change up your bread and assemble your favorite sandwich using pita bread, a sandwich wrap, or tortilla.
- ▶ Take your favorite sandwich fillings and add them to chopped lettuce for a salad.
- ▶ Make a pasta salad with leftover pasta, chopped vegetables, canned tuna or cooked chicken or ham, and a drizzle of low-fat salad dressing.
- ▶ Fill a storage container with raw vegetables and include low-fat dip or hummus.
- ▶ Eat breakfast for lunch by layering sliced fruit, yogurt, and granola in a storage container.
- ▶ Enjoy leftovers from last night's evening meal reheated in the microwave.



Consider Convenience

- Choose convenience foods like soups, frozen dinners, and microwaveable pastas carefully by selecting options with lower sodium and calories.
- Plan ahead and make extra food at dinnertime to be eaten as leftovers at lunchtime. Store in individual microwaveable containers for convenience.
- Put together your lunch the night before so it is ready to grab and go in the morning.



Think About Your Drink

- Save calories and money by choosing to drink water with your lunch. Sodas, fruit drinks, sweetened iced teas, and coffee drinks are filled with empty calories. Water is a good choice because it's calorie-free, inexpensive, and readily available.



Keep Your Lunch Safe To Eat

- Lunches that include perishable items such as meat, fish, poultry, or dairy need to be kept cold. Stick your lunch in the refrigerator or use an insulated lunch bag or cooler. Place a reusable gel ice pack in with your food to keep your lunch at the proper temperature.
- If a refrigerator or an insulated bag isn't available, pack foods that can be stored safely at room temperature such as crackers, peanut butter, or a single serving fruit cup.