

Nut-Free Lunch Ideas

Balanced lunches enable children to perform at their best. Use this meal matrix to help assemble kid-friendly lunches that will fuel greatness and support a lifelong healthy relationship with food! Some foods, such as hummus, will appear in more than one category, (healthy fat and protein).

Aim to include foods from 4 out of the 5 categories.

Pick A Protein (or 2)!:

- Beans, hummus
- Cheese Stick
- Chicken Breast
- Cottage cheese
- Ground beef or turkey
- Hard Boiled Egg
- Plain Milk
- Sunbutter
- Sunflower or pumpkin seeds
- Turkey, ham or roast beef
- Tuna
- Yogurt

Pick a Starch:

- Corn or whole grain tortilla
- Oats
- Potatoes
- Quinoa
- Rice
- Sweet potatoes
- Whole grain crackers
- Whole grain muffins
- Whole grain bread
- Whole grain pasta
- Whole wheat pita

Pick a Veggie:

- Broccoli
- Carrots
- Cauliflower
- Celery
- Cucumber Slices
- Peas
- Pepper strips
- Salsa
- Squash
- Tomatoes (whole or sauce)

Pick a Fruit:

- Apple or applesauce
- Banana
- Berries
- Clementine/Cuties
- Figs
- Grapes
- Melon
- Pear
- Raisins

Pick a Healthy Fat:

- Avocado
- Hummus/bean dip
- Pumpkin seeds
- Salad dressing or dip
- Sunbutter
- Sunflower seeds

Pick a beverage:

- Plain Milk
- Nut-free milk alternative
- Water

What about 'extras'?

Each child is unique and responds differently to food. The foods below can be included in a healthy, balanced lunch.

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|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| -6 oz. juice | -8 oz. chocolate milk | -1 small cookie |
| -1 cup Pirate Booty | -2 cup popcorn | -2 bite brownie |
| -1/2 cup graham crackers | -1/2 cup cheddar crackers | -Chocolate chips |

Nutrition concern or question? Email registered dietitian, Juliette, at: juliettebritton@gmail.com

Lunch Matrix Examples

- Turkey & Cheese with Lettuce on Tortilla Wrap + Grapes + Cheddar Crackers
- Sunbutter & Jelly on Whole Grain Bread + Apple Slices + Pepper Strips + Bean Dip
- Taco Meat + Tortilla + Cheese + Lettuce + Salsa + Corn Chips + Guacamole
- Hard boiled egg + Pita Bread + String Cheese + Hummus + Carrots + Grapes + cookie
- Minestrone Soup + Whole Grain Crackers + String Cheese + Cutie Oranges
- Meat & Veggie Lasagna + Whole Grain Dinner Roll + Apple Sauce
- Mexican Pizza (Beans on Tortilla with Salsa and Cheese) + Banana + chocolate chips
- Yogurt with drizzle of honey + Whole Grain Muffin + Fresh Berries + Pumpkin Seeds
- Turkey Veggie Chili + Corn Bread + Apple Sauce
- Chicken Breasts + BBQ Sauce on Whole Grain Bun + Green Beans + Fresh Pineapple
- Refried Beans + Rice + Salsa + Avocado Slices + Mango slices
- Ham and Cheese Melt + Broccoli w/ Greek Yogurt Ranch Dip + Orange Slices + brownie
- Roast beef + Crackers + Cheese + Cucumber + Dill Dip + Strawberries
- Celery with Sunbutter + Cottage Cheese with Berries + Whole Grain Graham Crackers
- Chicken Curry + Peas + Naan Bread + Melon Slices
- Tuna Salad + Whole Grain Bread + Snap Peas + Cherries + Popcorn
- Sunbutter and Strawberry Banana Spinach Smoothie made with Milk + Whole Grain cereal + Pumpkin & Sunflower Seed Trail Mix
- Spaghetti with Zucchini Meatballs + string cheese + cantaloupe + 1 cookie
- Whole Grain English Muffin Pizza + Cinnamon Maple Carrots + Dried Figs

LUNCH TIPS

- Put dinner leftovers to good use and cut down on lunch prep time! Bal Swan is happy to reheat items for your child.
- Involve your child in the lunch preparation process. Their input increases the likeliness of satisfied taste buds and tummies!
- Anticipate fluctuations in hunger and roll with resistance.
- Introduce new foods slowly. A complete lunch overhaul can be overwhelming for a child. Like all behavior changes, slow and steady is key! Include one new lunch item at a time.