

LUNCH BOX IDEAS

Helpful ideas for packing snacks & lunches for school!

Packing and coming up with healthy school lunch ideas can be challenging. There are several resources available online to make packing lunch easier. We gathered some of the best information to put all in one resource for you!

We do have to follow the State of Delaware's nutritional guidelines for lunches and snacks. According to Delacare Regulations:

- Snacks must have at least 2 items from 2 different food groups.
- Lunches must have at least 1 item from each of the 5 food groups.

See the graphic below for more information about the 5 Food Groups.

Start simple with MyPlate

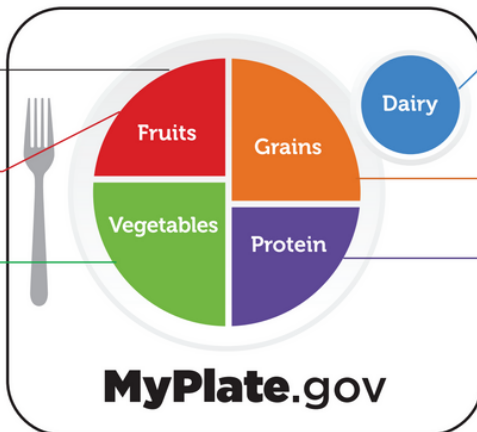
Healthy eating is important at every life stage, with benefits that add up over time, bite by bite. Small changes matter.

Make half your plate fruits and vegetables.

Focus on whole fruits.

Vary your veggies.

Limit Choose foods and beverages with less added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium.

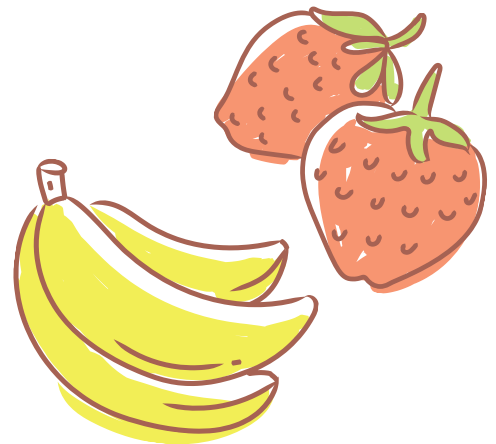


Move to low-fat or fat-free dairy milk or yogurt (or lactose-free dairy or fortified soy versions).

Make half your grains whole grains.

Vary your protein routine.

Activity Being active can help you prevent disease and manage your weight.



Fruits	Vegetables	Grains	Protein	Dairy
<p>Focus on whole fruits like fresh, frozen, canned, or dried.</p> <p>Buy fruits to have them available to add to your meal or eat as a snack. If you buy juice, select 100% fruit juice.</p>	<p>Eat a variety of vegetables and add them to mixed dishes like casseroles, sandwiches, and wraps.</p> <p>Fresh, frozen, and canned count, too. Look for "reduced sodium" or "no-salt-added" on the label.</p>	<p>Choose whole-grain versions of common foods such as bread, pasta, and tortillas.</p> <p>Not sure if it's whole grain? Check the ingredients list for the words "whole" or "whole grain."</p>	<p>Eat a variety of protein foods such as beans, soy, seafood, lean meats, poultry, and unsalted nuts and seeds.</p> <p>Select seafood twice a week. Choose lean cuts of meat and ground beef that is at least 93% lean.</p>	<p>Choose low-fat (1%) or fat-free (skim) dairy. Get the same amount of calcium and other nutrients as whole milk, but with less saturated fat and calories.</p> <p>Lactose intolerant? Try lactose-free milk or a fortified soy beverage.</p>

Daily Food Group Targets — Based on a 2,000 Calorie Plan

Visit MyPlate.gov/MyPlatePlan for a personalized plan.

2 cups	2½ cups	6 ounces	5½ ounces	3 cups
<p><i>1 cup counts as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 small apple 1 large banana 1 cup grapes 1 cup sliced mango ½ cup raisins 1 cup 100% fruit juice 	<p><i>1 cup counts as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 cups raw spinach 1 cup cooked collard, kale, or turnip greens 1 small avocado 1 large sweet potato 1 cup cooked beans, peas, or lentils 1 cup cut cauliflower 	<p><i>1 ounce counts as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 slice of bread ½ cup cooked oatmeal 1 small tortilla ½ cup cooked brown rice ½ cup cooked couscous ½ cup cooked grits 	<p><i>1 ounce counts as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 ounce cooked lean chicken, pork, or beef 1 ounce tuna fish ¼ cup cooked beans, peas, or lentils 1 Tbsp peanut butter 2 Tbsp hummus 1 egg 	<p><i>1 cup counts as:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 cup dairy milk or yogurt 1 cup lactose-free dairy milk or yogurt 1 cup fortified soy milk or yogurt 1½ ounces hard cheese 1 cup kefir

SEE THE BACK FOR MORE IDEAS!

COLD LUNCH IDEAS

A popular lunch item we see the most are sandwiches and roll-up pinwheels. You can make these with your child's favorite lunch meat and cheese or peanut butter and jelly. You can even cut up the lunch meat and cheese and make your own version of a lunchable!

Please be aware that some classrooms are peanut free! Peanut butter alternatives that can be used are: Sun Butter, Wow Butter or Cookie Butter. If your child is in a peanut/tree nut free classroom, please be sure to indicate on your child's lunch/snack if you used a peanut butter alternative!

Sandwich crackers are another fun lunch idea! Make little sandwich crackers with hummus, cream cheese, berry preserves or peanut butter and jelly.



WARMED LUNCH IDEAS

Thermoses are a great way to pack a warm lunch for your child! You can purchase these at Walmart or Amazon and they cost anywhere between \$12-\$20. Just prepare the food in the morning and store it in the thermos when it's still warm, and the contents will remain warm until lunch time!

Yummy warm food ideas:

Mac and Cheese, Chicken Tenders/Nuggets, Cut up Hot Dogs, Grilled Cheese Triangles, Scrambled Eggs, Oatmeal, Noodles, Rice and Veggies, Dinner Leftovers.

Just remember that Kids Cottage has a "No Heat Up" rule. If you would like your child to have warm food for lunch, please send it to school in a thermos.

SNACK IDEAS

Fruits: Cut up apples, bananas, blueberries (halved if large), raspberries (halved if large), cut up strawberries, peeled clementines/oranges, grapes (sliced horizontally in half or quarters), diced watermelon

Veggies: Baby carrots, cubed avocado, cherry tomatoes (sliced horizontally in halves/quarters, sliced cucumbers

Dairy/eggs: cubed cheese, cottage cheese, yogurt, hard boiled eggs

Grains: oatmeal, whole grain crackers, granola/snack bars, muffins