

# The Path to a Healthy Lunchbox

## Manage Portions

Here's a simple rule to portion a lunchbox properly: Divide it in half and automatically fill one side with fruits or vegetables, leaving the rest for equal parts protein and whole grains. Use containers designed with portions in mind to simplify the job.



## Encourage Involvement

Have your child help you prepare lunch! Getting them involved in the process will teach them about nutrition and ensure they have a healthy lunch every day!

## Get Creative

Create a rainbow game with the lunch box: each day, kids should strive to include fruits and vegetables from each color group, so at the end of each week they can build a rainbow.



Less than a quarter of children ages 2 to 5 meet government recommendations for vegetable consumption.<sup>1</sup>

## Consume Calcium

Parents are often surprised by how much calcium kids need daily. Mix and match good calcium sources to make sure your child gets the calcium they need in new and exciting ways.

How much calcium kids need daily:<sup>2</sup>

**Toddlers** (ages 1 to 3 years) **700 mg** of calcium daily

1 cup nonfat or low fat milk + 1 cup cooked broccoli + 2 slices processed low fat American cheese + 1 medium naval orange = 700 mg

**Kids** (ages 4 to 8 years) **1,000 mg** of calcium daily

2 cups nonfat or low fat milk + 1 cup cooked broccoli + 2 slices processed low fat American cheese + 1 medium naval orange + ½ cup cooked sweet potato = 1,000 mg

Nutrition information sourced from the USDA Nutrient Database.

## Stay Hydrated

Active kids need to stay well hydrated. Make sure your child gets the right amount of fluid throughout the day.



**Kids ages 1-3** should get 1.3 L fluid/day, or approximately 4 cups<sup>3</sup>



**Kids ages 4-8** should get 1.7 L fluid/day, or approximately 5 cups<sup>3</sup>

## End on a Sweet Note

The United States Department of Agriculture encourages parents to make fruit the everyday dessert and recommends individual containers of fruit that are easy and convenient like applesauce.<sup>4</sup> Jot down a quick lunch-box message and include it near the "dessert" so your child knows you're right there with them every day.



## Make Cold Lunch Cool Again...

Help kids learn moderation and portion control with the 90/10 rule: 90% of what kids eat during the day is a balance and variety of foods from the main food groups, and the other 10% is fun food!

## Mix & Match for a Balanced Lunchbox!

Choose one item from each column and add a lunchbox love note as a finishing touch!



**Protein, dairy, vegetables and whole grains**  
2 oz. (2 slices) turkey and 1 oz. (1 slice) cheese roll-ups with spinach leaves and red peppers in whole wheat wrap



**Whole grains, protein, fruit**  
½ cup cooked couscous with ½ oz. walnuts (about 7), 2 tablespoons of raisins and a chopped green apple



**Dairy, fruit and whole grains**  
1 cup low-fat yogurt with ½ cup blueberries and ¼ cup granola



**Applesauce**



**½ cup fruit salad**  
Mix your child's favorite with new items such as mango or kiwi



**Carrot sticks with 2 tablespoons of hummus**



**100% fruit juice**



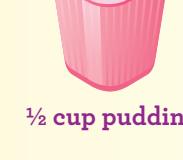
**Water**



**Non-fat or low-fat milk or chocolate milk**



**1 ounce pretzels or chips**



**½ cup pudding**



**Ants on a Log**  
2 celery stalks topped with 2 tablespoons of peanut butter and 2 tablespoons of raisins

1. Lorson, BA, et. a. Correlates of fruit and vegetable intakes in US children. *J Am Diet Assoc.* 2009; 109(3):474-8.

2. Committee to Review Dietary Reference Intakes for Vitamin D and Calcium, Food and Nutrition Board, Institute of Medicine. *Dietary Reference Intakes for Calcium and Vitamin D*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2010.

3. Dietary Reference Intakes. Available at: <http://fnic.nal.usda.gov/food-composition/macronutrients/water>

4. Choose MyPlate. Available at: <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/foodgroups/downloads/Ten%20Tips/DGTipsheet13CutBackOnSweetTreats.pdf>