

# BACK TO SCHOOL NUTRITION TIDBIT

## What's for Lunch?

It's that time of year again! With kids off to school they are faced with the question "what's for lunch?" With obesity on the rise, having a nutritious lunch is an important part of an overall healthful diet. The Stillwater Area Public Schools have revised the school lunch to provide and offer well-balanced, nutritious food selections. Most kids consume 1/3 of their daily total calories at lunchtime.

## What's a healthy bag lunch? (check yourself)

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The lunch provides at least one selection from each of the 5 food groups. i.e. milk, bread, fruit, vegetable, and meat.
1. \_\_\_\_\_ It contains no more than one item from the "extra's" food group. (i.e. chips, fruit snacks, sugary drinks and sweets.)
2. \_\_\_\_\_ It contains one high fiber food such as whole grain bread, pita, tortilla or fruit or vegetable.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Your child ate and enjoyed lunch. After all, a lunch not eaten will not nourish your child.



## Eco-Friendly Packing

While you're making over your children's school lunches, why not revamp the way you pack them as well? Instead of using a slew of disposable plastic bags and containers, try using wax paper, aluminum foil or cloth bags for sandwiches and snacks; nonleaching thermal containers for leftovers and soups; and lined metal bottles for beverages.



## All Snack Foods Are Not Created Equal



Prepared snack foods are popular with kids — and they can shorten lunch prep time for you — but it's important to read labels to root out any products that include problematic ingredients. To avoid: trans fats, high-fructose corn syrup, monosodium glutamate (MSG), preservatives, artificial sweeteners, colors and flavors — as well as any ingredients to which your kids might be allergic or sensitive. Avoid products that list sugars among the top few ingredients, and choose foods that contain naturally occurring or healthy fats vs. hydrogenated and fractionated oils.

# Kid-Friendly Lunch Treats

How to give kids healthier Versions of the foods they crave.

1. **Instead of chips and dip:**
  - Hummus and pita— serve roasted red-pepper hummus with toasted whole-wheat pita triangles.
  - Sweet-Potato Chips and Dip— Pair sweet potato chips with cottage cheese or a little sour cream.
2. **Instead of Cookies:**
  - PBJ Roll-Ups— Spread all fruit preserves and peanut or almond butter on a whole-grain tortilla; roll up.
  - Balls of Fun— Using a melon-baler, make small balls of watermelon, cantaloupe and honeydew melon.
3. **Instead of Fried Mozzarella Sticks:**
  - Nutty Cheese Balls— Roll soft cheddar cheese into the size and shape of marbles; roll cheese balls into chopped walnuts or slivered almonds until all sides are coated.
4. **Instead of Candy:**
  - Apples with Maple Yogurt Dip— Serve fresh apple slices with full-fat plain yogurt that's been spiked with a little maple syrup, which adds sweetness without excess sugar.
5. **Instead of Doughnuts or Pop Tarts:**
  - Cinnamon Crackers with Apple Sauce— Serve cinnamon graham crackers with unsweetened applesauce.
6. **Instead of Nachos:**
  - Guacamole and veggies— Serve prepared guacamole with celery sticks, baby carrots, zucchini slices, baked corn chips and baked whole-grain pita triangles.
  - Pretzel Plunge— Serve pretzel sticks with black bean dip or refried beans.
7. **Instead of Ice Cream:**
  - Fruit Smoothie— In a blender, combine 2/3 cup milk, 1/4 cup frozen raspberries or strawberries, and 1/4 cup sliced banana; puree until smooth.
8. **Instead of Bologna and Meat Sticks:**
  - Ham Roll-Ups— Top deli-sliced ham slices (or smoked turkey) with provolone cheese, shredded carrots and thinly sliced pickles and green bell peppers; roll up.
9. **Instead of Processed Cheese Crackers:**
  - Stuffed Cherry Tomatoes— Stuff cherry tomatoes with a mixture of cream cheese and diced pimento-stuffed olives.
  - Herbed Cheese “Sandwiches”— Spread herbed goat cheese on whole-grain crackers; top with second cracker.

This information is provided by Lakeview Hospital and Stillwater Medical Group in coordination with Stillwater Area Schools Community Education.  
Source: Experience Life- Healthy Eating (September 2008)