

## Lunchbox Survival Checklist

Use the list below as a guide for packing healthy, balanced lunches for your children and yourself!  
Don't forget to record servings of fruits and vegetables on the Healthy Habits Tracker.

- ✓ **Include food from each food group.** Make sure each lunch has whole grains, fruit, vegetables, a lean source of protein and dairy.
- ✓ **Include water or low-fat milk with each lunch.** Help your child stay hydrated at school by including water or milk and avoiding sodas and juices as they tend to be high in calories and added sugars.
- ✓ **Avoid prepackaged foods.** These foods tend to be high in sodium, added sugars and preservatives and they are also expensive.
- ✓ **Practice good food safety.** Keep cold foods cold with reusable ice packs and hot foods hot by using insulated lunch bags and thermoses.
- ✓ **Let kids take part in choosing what goes in the lunch.** Have children help pick out fruits, vegetables and other foods to include in their lunch. Pack foods you know they will eat or have at least tried before.
- ✓ **Create a lunch menu together.** Plan out what they would like to include in their lunch each day.
- ✓ **Keep food small and easy to eat.** For example, cut raw veggies into bit size pieces and serve them with a dip such as peanut butter, nut butter, salsa, pesto, hummus, guacamole or even low-fat ranch.
- ✓ **Take the work out of lunch.** Prepare food ahead of time by cutting up fruits and vegetables and placing them in individual re-sealable bags.
- ✓ **Have kids bring home what they don't eat.** This way you can see what they are and aren't eating to better tailor portion sizes and tastes to each individual child.
- ✓ **Allow a treat every once in a while.** It is okay to include that special treat every once in a while in your child's lunch. Just try not to make it a regular occurrence.

