

# Get your kids to eat smart at school

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(HealthDay)—Your kids eat healthful meals at home, but what about when they're at school?

Here are some simple ways to make sure your kids get the fuel they need to power them through the afternoon.

If you pack your child's lunch, make sandwiches with whole-grain bread, lean meat, lettuce and tomato. Skip salty options like prepackaged cold cuts in favor of slices from a turkey or chicken that you roast yourself. Include favorite fruits for snacks.

Get creative with vegetables by cutting them into fun shapes and packing them with a low-fat, low-sugar dipping sauce. Add fat-free milk or chocolate milk instead of juice drinks.

And let your child help fill his or her lunchbox. Kids are more likely to eat what they choose themselves, plus they'll learn healthy decision-making skills.

If your child buys lunch at [school](#), start by setting a good example at home. Use breakfasts and dinners to introduce a variety of healthy foods prepared in different ways so kids will recognize and choose them in the cafeteria. Remind them that, just like at home, they should fill half their plate with fruits and veggies and the other half with grains and protein. Explain that fatty choices like hotdogs and mac and cheese are just "sometimes foods."

Get your school involved in Team Nutrition, a free initiative of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Schools that participate in the program serve healthy, kid-friendly meals, include [nutrition](#) in their curriculum, and encourage regular exercise.

Signing up to be a Team Nutrition School is simple. It's open to any school that participates in the National School Lunch program. To get started, your school will need to designate a Team Nutrition Leader and have the support of its nutritionist and principal.

**More information:** Find out how your child's school can become a [Team Nutrition School](#) with easy-to-follow steps from the USDA.

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