



## THE NUTRITION MISSION

### Veggie-Packed Lunch Ideas that Won't Get Bagged

Does your child bring his or her veggies to school hoping to trade them for a sugary cupcake or processed gummy treats? With kids trading and trashing various lunch items such as sandwiches, fruit and veggies, milk and even snacks, it is difficult to guarantee that they are eating a well-balanced meal at school. But good nutrition is important and has even been tied to helping kids perform better in school, due to its ability to stabilize blood sugar levels and improve concentration.

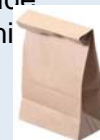
If your children don't like eating certain vegetables at home, chances are they won't eat them at school, so here are a few tips to get your kids making smart lunchtime decisions and ensure their brown-bagged meals are bound for the belly and not the waste bin.



- **Smart from the Start** - A great way to maximize the nutrients your child eats from his or her lunch is to involve them in the lunch-making process from the beginning. On the weekend, sit down with your kids to plan out their lunches for the week. Give them options to choose from for a "sandwich," "something crunchy" (give only veggie choices, like carrots with ranch dressing or pepper slices with hummus), "snack attack" (offer healthy options, like trail mix, apple slices with peanut butter or yogurt pretzels) and "something sippable" to wash it all down.
- **Supermarket Spree** – Make an event of taking your child to the grocery store and allowing them to fill the cart. Talk through each of their food choices and support them in making healthy decisions. This is also a great time to teach older children how to read nutrition labels.
- **Kiddie Cooks** – The night before school, enlist your child to help make his or her lunch. Time it for when you are making dinner so that you can supervise and take advantage of the time you'll already be in the kitchen.
- **Playful Ideas** – Let kids cut sandwiches into fun shapes using cookie cutters, or chop veggies into playful shapes like wheels, curly-ques, or add ridges. These playful tricks will make veggie eating a treat.
- **Brown Bag Buddies** – Partner with another family and allow your children to take turns making nutritious snacks that they can share with their closest friends. The positive encouragement from peers will open little eyes to new vegetables and make veggie eating a group activity.

#### Trading Up?

According to study by Wirthlin Worldwide almost half of chi surveyed trade lunch items at least once or twice a week<sup>i</sup>.



#### Tales of Brown Bag Blues

When kids were asked why they trade lunch items, most said that they didn't like their own lunch or were bored with the same items.<sup>i</sup>

<sup>i</sup> Wirthlin Worldwide, May/June 1998