



The start of the new academic school year is a good time to establish new routines. One of these to consider is bringing a more nutritious lunch! A healthy lunch begins with a balanced meal of carbohydrates, protein and fats. Lunch is an important mid-day meal for fueling your body for the remainder of the school or work day. Packing your own lunch saves you money and gives you control of the ingredients so you can make healthy choices that you enjoy.

Here are some healthy options to consider for your “new and improved lunch”:

1. To keep sandwiches from getting tiring, use various breads selections such as bagels, dinner rolls, pita, tortillas, crackers. Whenever possible choose whole grains over refined grains for a rich source of fiber, vitamins and antioxidants which all contribute to good health. Remember to read your label carefully, looking for the word “whole” as the first ingredient and to check the fiber content (aim for 2 or more grams per slice) to be sure you have a true whole grain product.
2. Instead of using processed lunch meat every day, try using leftovers to create a sandwich filling or to create a mixed dish. Be sure to include a protein source to sustain your energy level.(leftover chicken or turkey, meat, fish, tofu) Get creative and adventuresome! How about a quesadilla incorporating a leftover protein such as chicken or ham, cheese, peppers, onions and tomatoes between 2 tortillas. Cut into triangles and reheat before eating if desired?
3. Don't forget your fruits and veggies! These are tops for color, texture, and nutritional value and add fiber and antioxidants. Variety is key! Baby carrots are healthy and easy but how about cucumber, cherry or grape tomatoes, zucchini, colored peppers, cauliflower, and broccoli. If dipping sauce helps, consider low-calorie salad dressings, dips made from low fat yogurt and sour cream, hummus, salsa. Add lettuce. Cucumbers or tomatoes to sandwiches (may want to pack separate to avoid soggy bread!) Vegetable or tomato juice is another easy option. For fruit, grab a whole piece or cut up melon, berries, kiwi, grapes for a colorful and nutritious fruit salad. Canned fruit packed in water or juice or dried fruit or a 100% juice box is another option. Vanilla yogurt is an easy and yummy dip!
4. Don't leave out the dairy group! Yogurt is a good source of protein and calcium—choose a brand with active live bacterial cultures or probiotics (read about the many health benefits <http://www.nationaldairycouncil.org/NationalDairyCouncil/Health/Digest/dcd76-1Page3.htm>) Cheese is a major a source of saturated fat so watch your portion or consider lower fat cheese. Likewise, it's best if milk and other dairy products are fat-free (skim) or lower fat (1%).There are many more of these food products available now.
5. A healthy homemade trail mix could be part of a lunch or eaten as a morning or afternoon snack. Mix nuts, crunchy whole grain cereal and dried fruit such as raisins or dried cranberries. Add a few chocolate chips for sweetness if desired. Just be sure to control the portion size!
6. For beverage choices, water, milk or tea are your most nutritious choices. Also, soy milk now also comes in smaller tetra packs. Avoid sugary drinks like fruit drink, fruit punch or soda.

The routine of the new academic year is a great time to make activity/exercise a priority in your schedule as well. Schedule this in just as you would your meals and other appointments. It will benefit your health, enhance your mood and help with stress reduction as well.

Are you a chronic dieter? This month's lunch-and-learn may be for you! We will discuss "Intuitive Eating - Creating a Healthy Relationship with Food, Mind and Body"
Thursday August 30 from noon to 1 PM in 0331 Palmer. Please call (4-9625) or e-mail if you'd like to reserve a spot!

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