

## Easy Every Day Healthy Lunches

Tired of eating out for lunch? Are you looking to making your own lunches, but don't know were to start? Studies actually show that we consume more calories when we eat out, between 100 and 1,000 more per meal!

As Latinos, it's important to know that eating healthy meals and being active can give you more energy, help you look better, help you concentrate better, help you feel better about yourself and keep you healthy, but it's not always easy to do. So, if you are agonizing about what to pack for lunch, relax, help is on the way!

How can you prepare effortless and delicious meals? When you're planning your lunch menus for the week, keep your lunches in mind as you can probably make a little extra for your lunches. You can simply grill an extra piece of chicken or save an extra serving of a pasta salad for your lunch meal. Try cutting your extra meat into strips or bite size pieces and place them into small freezer bags. Cabbage, carrots, beets or bell peppers freeze very well and can turn a wrap into a colorful nutritious lunch.

Below you will find an easy to follow chart that will help you make lunch preparation a little easier. Simply, choose an item from each column and pack them in a lunch container.

By choosing foods from each food group, you can be assured you are getting enough of the nutrients you need every day.

<b>Essential ingredients for building a healthy lunch box</b>				
<b>Pick one of each</b>				
<b>Protein</b>	<b>Grains</b>	<b>Dairy</b>	<b>Fruits</b>	<b>Vegetables</b>
Hard boiled egg	Pita bread	LF yogurt	Mango slices	Cucumber slices
Deli meat slices	Whole grain crackers	Yogurt sticks	Pineapple chunks	Cherry tomatoes
Veggie patties	Pretzels	Yogurt smoothies	Orange segments	Jicama slices
Meatballs	High fiber dried cereal	LF cottage cheese	Watermelon cubes	Baby carrot
Beans	Whole grain bread	LF cheese sticks	Apple sauce	Canned beets
Tofu chunks	Corn tortillas	Cheese wedge	Raisins	Canned corn
Tuna fish	Pretzel bread	LF or FF milk	Canned peaches	Bell pepper sticks
Chunks of chicken			Apple wedges	Edamame peas
			Strawberry slices	
			Kiwi slices	
			Grapes	

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### **Beverages**

Milk – 8oz  
Chocolate milk – 8oz  
Water  
Sparkling water  
100% fruit juice – 8oz pack  
Low calorie beverages  
Mini soda cans – 6oz can

### **Extras**

Packing containers/baggies  
Plastic ware  
Napkin  
Wipes

The road to a healthy and fit body should not be complicated. Try to keep a healthy weight by first finding out the weight that is healthy and try to get there gradually. Visit <http://www.choosemyplate.gov/supertracker> to find your desirable weight and for a number of tips and menus. Stay active by moving as much as possible during the day. Dancing, walking, bike riding, and running are some of the activities that can help you stay active for at least 60 minutes. Eat regular, small and balance meals. Try to include three meals and 2 small snacks per day. Eating regularly, especially breakfast, will keep up your energy and attention. Just make sure those portions are small and appropriate for your age and activity level. Control the snack attacks by limiting calorie dense snacks. Fruits and vegetables, low fat yogurt, popcorn or small burritos are great snacks. Go easy of treats. Choose them wisely and sporadically. But, do give yourself permission once in a while to have your favorite treats occasionally, if needed.

The benefits of healthy balanced meals go far beyond a fit body. You'll move better and faster, have more energy and feel better.