

What's in Your Lunch Box?

► A new lunch box is often at the top of the school supply list. Make sure the foods you pack in your child's lunch box are tasty, healthy, and bacteria free.

Families have many lunch box choices—red, blue, yellow, purple, and green not to mention the names and pictures of the latest movies and television shows that children love. Just about any choice a child might want.



When your child has decided on his or her favorite lunch box, how do you serve a tasty, healthy, bacteria-free lunch and keep the lunch box clean?

Choose nonperishable foods. These could be peanut butter and jelly or your child's favorite prepackaged lunch kit. If you have a child who prefers foods like hot dogs or hamburgers or even the prepackaged lunch kit that requires refrigeration, you must purchase a freezer pack to keep the food cold. Keeping your child's lunch cold will prevent possible food poisoning. To prevent foodborne illness from occurring, place an ice pack in the bottom of the lunch box. If the lunch box is large, use an ice pack on the bottom and top.

Include fruits and vegetables. Put them in an airtight container with ranch dressing for the vegetables and a fresh dip for the fruit. Remember to add the freezer pack to keep foods cold.



All food has the potential to grow bacteria that can make you sick if not stored properly. To keep your child's lunch box bacteria free, follow these steps:

- Wash out the lunch box every day.
- If you prepare food the night before, DO NOT store the lunch in the lunch box overnight for the next day. This will result in bacteria growing in the food.
- Store the food in the refrigerator and then place it in the lunch box the following morning. This will keep the food safe.

If your lunch box is dishwasher safe, use it to keep the lunch box clean. This method is fast and will disinfect the lunch box for the next day. If you do not have a dishwasher or the lunch box is not dishwasher safe, use hot soapy water to wash and disinfect it. Let the lunch box dry completely before putting food inside because this will keep the lunch box germ and bacteria free.

By following these simple guidelines, you can enjoy a safe, bacteria-free lunch and then safely ask, What's in your lunch box?

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